



Investigation into the Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth

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A Report by the Human Rights Commission

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Part I: How This Hearing Came About

The public hearing and this report resulted from the growing visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth in San Francisco. In 1995, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee (LGBTAC) of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission created a Youth Task Force (YTF) to investigate the needs of LGBTQQ youth.

This report is a compilation of material, testimony, and information submitted by LGBTQQ youth, other community members, community organizations, school officials, and representatives of City agencies and departments. This report is built upon the words and ideas of all those who testified at the hearing, submitted written materials, and offered commentary on the content of the findings and recommendations. Every attempt has been made to accurately reflect the information submitted.

In order to be as inclusive as possible, the organizers of this public hearing and report agreed to use the terms Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQQ) to describe the identity of sexual and gender "minority" individuals. It is recognized and respected that some people may feel alienated by one or more of these terms, and that some individuals may object to the use of labels to describe their identities. In some portions of the summary of public testimony, the terms chosen by a speaker are used instead of using only the "LGBTQQ" term, in order to preserve the content of the speaker's testimony.

LGBTQQ people face fear and hatred from other individuals, in institutions, and in the

community, based on their sexual and gender identities. Rather than just describing this as "homophobia", the organizers of this public hearing and report have chosen to refer to these oppressions as homophobia, biphobia, heterosexism, and transphobia.

A sincere effort has been made to use the appropriate gender pronouns to refer to speakers and other participants. If a person has explicitly stated that they prefer a certain gender pronoun, or none at all, this is reflected in the record. In cases where this is not explicitly stated, there may be mistakes based on gender assumptions. We apologize for these mistakes. We encourage readers to inform us of any pronoun changes for subsequent printings of the report. In some cases, the pronoun "she" is used as the universal pronoun to challenge the sexist English-language tradition of using masculine pronouns as universal.

After discussions with many young people and youth service providers and agencies throughout the City, the organizers of the public hearing defined "youth" as persons 25 years old and younger. Because some LGBTQQ people may not question their sexual and gender identity until adolescence or later, LGBTQQ people may not encounter some of the issues that face youth until their early twenties. Keeping this in mind, the organizers nonetheless wanted to ensure that the hearing would be "youth- focused"; hence, efforts were made to ensure that youth under 18 and youth under 21 were not alienated or excluded by the inclusion of young people up to 25.

The Human Rights Commission and the City's Youth Commission gave this project priority by holding a public hearing on September 26, 1996 and provided the overall vision to ensure proper balance and representation. The

Youth Commissioners participating and present at the hearing were Jesse Costello-Good (Co-Chair), Kent Khounsombath (Co-Chair), Maritza Marshall, and Sarah Spoon. The Human Rights Commissioners participating and present at the hearing were Martha Knutzen (Chairperson), Marivic Bamba, Youn-Cha Shin Chey, Agar Jaicks, German Martinez, Comer Marshall, Antonio Salazar-Hobson, Ghada Saliba-Malouf, Rhonda Rochon, and Melecio Santos.

Staff members of the Human Rights Commission's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and HIV Unit — Coordinator Larry Brinkin and Representatives Brian Cheu and Cynthia Goldstein— performed and coordinated the tasks required of putting together the public hearing. Mr. Cheu coordinated YTF and LGBTAC members who participated in formulating, advertising, and coordinating the public hearing; identifying, contacting, meeting with and notifying individuals, organizations, City officials, agencies, the School District, and the media; collecting and evaluating information and testimony; and reviewing and commenting on successive drafts of this report and the findings and recommendations. Ms. Goldstein coordinated volunteer participation in the directing and holding of the public hearing. Mr. Brinkin provided staff management oversight to the hearing and this report. Director Marivic Bamba, former Director Ed Lee, and former Interim Director Frank Anderson provided valuable leadership and support to the hearing and the report. Interns Yong Lee and Lisa Noshay-Petro also assisted with many aspects of the hearing.

Community members of the Youth Task Force involved with planning the hearing included Doug Au, Meredith Broome, Ken Bukowski, Jesse Costello-Good, Deja Dior, Dori Ehrlich, Gordon Elkins, Karen Golinski, Dean Goodwin, Robin Haaland, Dennis Isner, Crystal Jang, Kent Khounsombath, Justin Louie, Mark Rhoades, Mara Rosen, Hasan Shafiquillah, Oren

Slozberg, Lynn Sykes, Mitch Thompson, Vitaly, Chris Young, and Scott Ziehm.

LGBTAC members of the Youth Task Force involved with planning the hearing were Rachel Bernstein, Ahimsa Bodhrán, William Bland, Quang H. Dang, Edd Dundas, Agar Jaicks, Eddie Kaufman, Howard Kwong, Martha Knutzen, Shadow Morton, Gloria Soliz, Rachel Timoner, and Kiki Whitlock.

Special acknowledgment is due to committee members Eddie Kaufman and Rachel Bernstein for their hard work and diligence throughout the process: drafting goals and objectives, preliminary policy recommendations, and convening more than one person's share of subcommittee meetings; and to LGBTAC member Rachel Timoner and intern Lisa Noshay-Petro for planning the youth speakers' trainings.

Special thanks also to the Hastings law students whose hard work ensured the timely drafting and editing of the findings and recommendations: Robin Haaland, Chris Hwang, Mara Rosen, Hasan Shafiquillah, Vitaly; to Mae Chu (court reporter); and to Denise Debrunner (Graphic Designer, City Reproduction).

Other people who have been instrumental to making the public hearing and this report possible are Ed Capshaw of Noah's Bagels; Citywatch staff Jennifer Schuler and Michael Freeman; Food donors; David German from City Reproduction; Beth Murray, Managing Director to the War Memorial; Matt Onek, Youth Commission Director; and John Taylor, Clerk for the Board of Supervisors.

Special acknowledgment is due to present and former members of the LGBTAC whose commitment and participation in the public hearing were integral to its success: Virginia Benavidez, Rachel Bernstein, William Bland, Ahimsa Bodhrán, Robert Bray, Vince

Crisostomo, Quang Dang, Lani Ka'ahumanu, Eddie Kaufman, Howard Kwong, Yolanda Lewis, Rosa Lizarde, Randy Miller, Adele Morrison, Shadow Morton, Laura Perez, Terry Person, Wally Sherwood, Rachel Timoner, and Kiki Whitlock.

Particular recognition goes to all the young people who testified at the hearing, those that chose to remain anonymous, and those who could not attend because of personal circumstances.

Part II:

LGBTQQ Youth —Self-Discovery, Defining Themselves and Speaking Out

It is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth / Audre Lorde, The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action 1977

Audre Lorde spoke these words 20 years ago. That's enough time for an entire generation of transgender bisexual lesbian gay queer and questioning youth to be born, to grow, to articulate the contours of their existence, to create and find identities, and for some of these young lives, to end.

What is the story of these lives? How do they fit together? Where is the record of events that chronicle them?

Any attempt to write the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth will be incomplete. The good work of a group of LGBTQQ youth activists might make it into the pages of a local newspaper, but where can we read about a

13-year old who decides one morning to try on a sibling's suit and tie rather than a skirt and blouse? The history of LGBTQQ youth *cannot* be captured in a textbook or a documentary, but rather it is spun by daily acts of self-discovery and resistance. The challenge then is to identify and eradicate the obstacles that confront LGBTQQ youth as they struggle to determine who they are and come into their own.

Self-discovery is an important step in the continued survival and growth of LGBTQQ youth. Even before a young person may start to question her sexual and/or gender identity, she is bombarded by messages of heterosexism, transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia. These messages are imbedded within families, schools, peers, movies, music, television, books, newspapers, public figures, and churches. Learning to feel ashamed, isolated, and fearful can prevent a young LGBTQQ person from discovering who she is and may lead to depression, suicide, substance abuse, and low confidence. LGBTQQ youth need to feel safe, feel supported, and to know they are not alone.

For many LGBTQQ youth, self-discovery is a journey that begins with simple survival—a commodity taken for granted by many of us who have more comfortable living situations. LGBTQQ youth have been thrown out of their homes, made fun of and beaten up in schools, and subjected to cruel psychiatric abuse because of their sexual and gender identities. A homeless LGBTQQ youth needs to worry about where she will spend the night, when she will eat again, and whether she will need to sell her body for survival.

Even in "lesbian and gay sensitive" spaces, a young person who is bisexual or transgender may be told that they are confused, going through a phase, or that they don't belong. That young person may end up feeling even more isolated than before, or they might

try to fit themselves into an acceptable lesbian or gay label, thereby also foregoing self-discovery.

On top of all this, some LGBTQQ youth have to face many other biases that compound with the ones mentioned above. Youth of color face racism within the LGBTQQ community and may feel like they have to choose between their racial/ethnic identity and their sexual/gender identity. Young women continue to fight against sexism. LGBTQQ youth who do not speak English face a near vacuum of language-appropriate resources and services. Young people with disabilities may find that existing resources are inaccessible. LGBTQQ youth from families with low socioeconomic status may find it hard to engage in activities and events that require money.

Nonetheless, many LGBTQQ youth have not only overcome the many obstacles to self-discovery, but once coming into their own, they have realized that they are not alone—so they search out others like themselves. LGBTQQ youth have succeeded in reaching out to others like them and in helping one another through the hard times.

On September 26, 1996, at this historic public hearing, LGBTQQ youth came together to speak out about enduring the hard times, coming out to themselves and others, fighting to survive, transforming their families of origin and families of choice, and trying to create communities where they are taken seriously and can grow. The words of these youth and the unspoken, undocumented acts of countless others like them testify to the continued efforts of LGBTQQ youth to articulate their existence and create their lives.

Three years ago, transgender activists spoke out for the City to investigate the discrimination that they face. Their powerful words echo the demands articulated by

LGBTQQ youth today to:

[We] call for an end to excessive pain and suffering, to restore lost dignity, to demand the basic respect accorded to every human being in a civilized society. We are calling for an end to hatred, to abuse, to disrespect. We are calling for the right to define ourselves to say for ourselves who we are. And we are calling for the end of persecution, be it based on fear, ignorance, or bigotry. We are asking to be recognized because we exist. We are reclaiming our past, and we intend to have a future /
Jamison Green, Investigation into Discrimination Against Transgendered People, 1994

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Summary

From May 1995 through 1996, the Youth Task Force (YTF) of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee (LGBTAC) met monthly to define its focus, develop a working relationship between LGBTAC members and community members, and begin work on specific issues facing LGBTQ youth. The YTF chose four major substantive areas: Legal Issues, Mental Health, Places to Hang Out, and the San Francisco Unified School District. In addition, the YTF investigated a youth curfew proposal and worked in collaboration with the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) to produce a resource guide, "OUT In the City" (See Appendix L).

Past and present LGBTAC members involved with the Youth Task Force during this period included William Bland, Vince Cristostomo, Quang H. Dang, Timothy Höring, Eddie Kaufman, Jeanette Lazam, Shadow Morton, Gloria Soliz, Rachel Timoner, and Kiki Whitlock.

Community members participating during this period included Christopher A., Rick Aguirre, Chandra Andrews, Doug Au, Ellis Avery, Francisco Barragan, Michael Baxter, Meredith Broome, Ken Bukowski, Tamara Ching, Lulu Chou, Cheryl Deaner, B.J. Douglas, Gordon Elkins, Maria Fadli, Lori Guidos, Crystal Jang, Jennifer, Brad Jensen, Ruth Hughes, Karen Jones-Mason, Marjon Kashani, Kent Khounsombath, Howard Kwong, Diane Manning, Anne Mattis, Shannon Minter, Camille Moran, Laura Murphy, Hung Nguyen, Kelly O'Neill, Nancy Presson, Sandra Ruiz, Roderick Santonil, Brian Sharber, Oren Slozberg, Zoevonda Sutton, Noel Talens, Mitch Thompson, Christopher Yang, and Scott Ziehm.

The Human Rights Commission staff member assigned to work with the Youth Task Force was Brian Cheu, and staff members Larry

Brinkin and Cynthia Goldstein, and interns Larry Boylan, Robert Greeley, and Dennis Hanna also participated during this period.

In 1996, having seen the breadth and depth of issues facing LGBTQ youth, the YTF agreed to recommend that the Human Rights Commission convene a public hearing for queer youth, inspired by the 1994 Public Hearing, "Investigation into Discrimination Against Transgendered People." In July 1996, the Human Rights Commission approved a recommendation by the YTF and the LGBTAC to hold a hearing on September 26, 1996. Shortly thereafter, the Youth Commission agreed to co-sponsor the public hearing.

The public hearing, held September 26, 1996 from 4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, was attended by Youth Commissioners Jesse Costello-Good (Co-Chair), Kent Khounsombath (Co-chair), Maritza Marshall, and Sarah Spoon, and Human Rights Commissioners Martha Knutzen (Chairperson), Maravic Bamba, Youn-Cha Shin Chey, Agair Jaicks, German Martinez, Comer Marshall, Antonio Salazar-Hobson, Ghada Saliba-Malouf, Rhonda Rochon, and Melicio Santos; Interim HRC Director Frank Anderson; Dean Goodwin and Jonnie Robinson representing the Office of Mayor Willie Brown; Supervisor Tom Ammiano, Supervisor Susan Leal, Supervisor Michael Yaki, and Crystal Weston representing Supervisor Leslie Katz.

The hearing was the first ever public hearing on LGBTQ youth in San Francisco. It may have been one of the first times in the country that young LGBTQ people have testified on their own behalf in such a public government-sponsored forum. The purpose of the hearing was to hear testimony from LGBTQ youth under 25 and to assess the availability and effectiveness of services for

LGBTQQ youth in schools; family, housing, and shelters; health services; youth services; and the juvenile justice system.

The public hearing was organized into eight sections:

I. Introduction and Overview—in which the City officials were recognized and the attendees welcomed and acknowledged. Commissioner Knutzen (chair) welcomed everyone to the historic hearing. All the Human Rights and Youth Commissioners introduced themselves.

Commissioner Knutzen noted that the Mayor's office is holding a Youth Summit on October 5 and 6, 1996 to establish the needs of and set the policy for all youth in San Francisco. She thanked Commissioner Saliba-Malouf for serving on the steering committee of the Youth Summit and agreeing to take the testimony and recommendations from this public hearing to the Summit.

Commissioner Knutzen thanked all the people who participated in the organization of the hearing and the staff of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and HIV Unit of the Human Rights Commission—Larry Brinkin, Cynthia Goldstein, and Brian Cheu. She especially thanked Mr. Cheu for his hard work through months of committee and subcommittee meetings resulting in tonight's testimony. Commissioner Knutzen also thanked Vice-Chair Commissioner Jaicks and Jonnie Robinson, special assistant to the Mayor.

Commissioner Knutzen dedicated the hearings to the memory of young people who did not make it out of their childhood because of the abuse they received due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Commissioner Costello-Good, Secretary of the Youth Commission and co-chair of

this hearing, gave introductory remarks regarding the history of gay rights activism in San Francisco over the past 20 years which has failed to recognize the achievements and struggles of queer youth. He pointed out that current hot topics in gay rights like marriage, the military, and job discrimination are primarily geared to adults over 18. Queer youth do not jump into existence at age 18. Queer youth face harassment, discrimination in schools, have a three times higher suicide rate, get kicked out of their homes for being honest, and the older gay community can't serve gay youth without being labeled child molesters. Commissioner Costello-Good called for discussion about ways to change San Francisco to better serve LGBTQQ youth.

Commissioner Khounsombath, Treasurer of the Youth Commission and co-chair of this hearing, thanked everyone who made it to the hearing, and gave a special thanks to Supervisors Ammiano and Yaki for showing their support to gay youth. He described the hearing as an opportunity for San Francisco youth to say what they have to say—about their lives, their struggles, coming out, and issues pertaining to culture, race, background, class, and gender.

Commissioner Khounsombath dedicated the hearing to his good friend Adam who is 14 years old and in the hospital from trying to commit suicide last week. He also gave tribute to all those who could not be at the hearing because they are literally no longer here—the road being too hard and the pressures of society too much for them to bear alone.

Supervisors Yaki and Ammiano were introduced and addressed the hearing. Legislative Aide Weston spoke on behalf of Supervisor Katz. Bill Ambrunn was introduced as representing Supervisor Leal, who later came to attend the hearing.

2. Youth Speaking for Themselves— in which 24 self-identified LGBTQQ youth ages 13-25 testified about their experiences as young people coming out or living as LGBTQQ youth. Some of the speakers spoke positively about resources and services they used to overcome the harsh discrimination and harassment they have faced in schools, housing programs, health services, youth services, and the juvenile justice system. Many speakers expressed the great levels of need that LGBTQQ youth have. Some speakers were hopeless that anything could ever improve because their situations were so difficult. Some speakers offered concrete recommendations for improving existing conditions for LGBTQQ youth.

3. Youth and the Schools— in which 10 speakers testified about existing and needed services for students in the San Francisco Unified School District. Testimony came from school officials, teachers, parents, and community members.

4. Family, Housing, and Shelter— in which 8 speakers testified about services available and needed for LGBTQQ youth who are homeless. Testimony came from representatives of the Department of Human Services, the Alternative Family Project, the Larkin Street Center, Hospital House Youth Program, Street Survival Project, Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow Group Home, and community members.

5. Youth and Health— in which 8 speakers testified about health services available and needed for LGBTQQ youth. Testimony came from representatives of the Department of Public Health, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Center for Special Problems, the Chances for Youth Collaborative, Living Well Project, Walden House, Bay Positives, the WEDGE Program, and an individual therapist.

6. Youth Services— in which 8 speak-

ers testified about youth services available and needed for LGBTQQ youth. Testimony came from representatives of the Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and their Families, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Queer Youth Job Training Collaborative, LYRIC, Visitation Valley Beacon Center, the San Francisco YMCA, the Asian AIDS Project, and LYFE.

7. The Juvenile Justice System— in which 5 speakers testified about services available and needed for LGBTQQ youth in the juvenile justice system. Testimony came from representatives of the police department, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Hall, and Special Programs for Youth,

8. Public Comment— in which 4 speakers testified about the needs of homeless youth on the streets, transgender youth, and young adults in recovery from substance abuse. In the body of this report, these speakers' testimonies have been summarized into the subject area to which they are related.

Based upon evidence so gathered, the Commission announced 96 Findings and 116 Recommendations on December 12, 1996. Continued input and feedback from community members, committee members, and Commissioners resulted in recommended amendments for approval and adoption by the Commission on June 12, 1997. The final 97 Findings and 116 Recommendations can be found in Chapter 4 of this report.

Chapter 1 . . .

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQQ) Youth Speaking for Themselves

Youth Speaking for Themselves

Gina De Vries . . .

Ms. De Vries is a 13-year old lesbian who attends eighth grade at a small Catholic elementary school in San Francisco. Ms. De Vries reports that students are underserved in both public and private schools and that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youths are physically and emotionally abused by their peers.

Ms. De Vries recommends that class discussions include queer youth issues. Teachers should be sensitive and supportive to the needs of queer youth. Schools, government, and the community must respond to the needs of queer youth.

Wilson Fang . . .

Mr. Fang is a facilitator for the young men's group at LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center) and a volunteer for the Golden Gate Youth Services LYFE program. Mr. Fang stated that he is proud to live in San Francisco because of the way it includes its diverse members into a family. However, the City has failed to meet the needs of queer youth. Medical care remains inaccessible to many queer youth, especially those that belong to lower income groups, the unemployed, and those that have been cut off from their families.

Mental health services, including counseling and medication are also needed to help queer youth deal with emotional hurdles they might face. The City should also launch a campaign to let young people know these services are available.

Chandra Andrews . . .

Ms. Andrews is the assistant director of the outreach program at Street Survival Project, a project for the Center for Young Women's Development. Ms. Andrews was forced to move out of her home when she was 16 years old, one year after coming out to her family and friends. In order to get an apartment contract, Ms. Andrews had to get a job and get legally emancipated.

Ms. Andrews stresses the importance for young people to have options so they can take care of themselves if they are kicked out of their homes for coming out.

David Lopez . . .

Mr. Lopez calls for an end to silence and ignorance; challenging the community to replace homophobia and intolerance with education. He calls on youth service programs to strengthen the self-esteem and self-worth of queer youth.

Adriana San Pedro . . .

Ms. San Pedro is a lesbian who has been involved with the juvenile justice system. When she has been locked up in Juvenile Hall, she has experienced discrimination by other people locked up and by staff. She states that she was never given a roommate because she is a lesbian. Special showering arrangements were made to prevent her from showering with the other girls.

Ms. San Pedro doesn't believe that things are going to change. The juvenile system doesn't care about youth in general, let alone queer youth. She feels hopeless about the whole thing.

Vitaly . . .

Vitaly is 24 years old and identifies both as a queer youth and as a queer adult. He has

witnessed discrimination and abuse against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth in schools, shelters, Youth Guidance Center, and in their own homes. In order for any plan of action to survive in the long run, there needs to be systemic change in people's attitudes.

Mark Rhoades . . .

Mr. Rhoades is the president of the Gay/Lesbian Club at City College and the only openly gay student on the Council of City College. Mr. Rhoades would like to see more lesbian and gay scholarships, and more money allocated for gay and lesbian activities, counselors, and teachers.

Alexander D. Sarmiento . . .

Mr. Sarmiento is 14 years old, identifies as a queer youth, and attends International Studies Academy. Mr. Sarmiento reports he has been continuously teased and harassed since coming out about his sexual identity. He has also experienced problems at home, particularly when his family uses the Bible to condemn him for being gay. He suffered a major depression due to the responses of his family and spent four weeks in a hospital where he made more understanding friends.

Mr. Sarmiento hopes that people can accept one another whether they are gay, straight, bi, trans, or whatever, because he is proud of who he is and thinks everyone should be.

Hillary Brown . . .

Hillary Brown, 21 years old, is a transgender male to female lesbian. She came out to her parents when she was 6 years old and to her friends when she was 19 years old. Many of her friends do not accept her, so she spends a lot of time at home. The only places she goes to are LYRIC and the Brothers Network.

Brett Van . . .

Brett Van is an HIV-positive young adult in recovery. The needs of young adults are special and distinct from those of adolescents and adults. Young adults often lack the education, vocation, and independent life skills that adults have because they have lost time in the swirling maelstrom of drug use.

Mr. Van recommends, on behalf of various young adults from several local recovery and independent living programs, the building of a single young adult recovery program with three phases: (1) a 90-day program for recovery; (2) a 90-day program of vocational and educational rehabilitation; and (3) a six-month program of assisted living and housing support.

Mr. Van suggests that Baker Places, Walden House Inc., Larkin Street Youth Center; and BAY Positives work together to support a young adult recovery program. The house should be run by a steering committee and staffed by young adults who are themselves in recovery, since young adults seeking a substance abuse recovery program may better relate to them.

Chris Young . . .

Chris Young is 16 years old and attends Lowell High School. Mr. Young reports that his health teacher demonstrated ignorance when teaching about homosexuality, making him feel bashed rather than educated. He thinks the schools need to improve education so he doesn't have to be scared of being bashed or called derogatory terms in the hallway.

Mr. Young has been to different organizations in San Francisco for queer youth. He has been involved with LYRIC and AQU²⁵A (Asian Queers Under 25 Altogether). Other than these two organizations, many in the City are run from the perspective of some larger organizations, often

focusing on HIV, and are not really just for youth in the community.

Mona Forde . . .

Mona Forde is an openly queer senior at George Washington High School in the Richmond District. She considers herself very lucky. Her school has a gay/straight alliance, a peer resource center with a queer awareness team, and teachers that are openly gay and make themselves available and visible to students.

Ms. Forde is also a volunteer at LYRIC and has an internship at Drama Divas. She considers herself lucky to have a “protective queer bubble” that allows her to feel confident. She knows that not everybody has the resources and opportunities she does, but she feels they should. Her positive experiences shouldn’t be just because she has been lucky—others should be as fortunate, and the first step is more resources in the schools.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán . . .

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán identifies as a 22 year old Spanish, Arab-African, German Jew and Irish Catholic. He testified as a rape survivor.

He has encountered many barriers in accessing services. There is a silence on the subject of rape in the LGBTQQ community, due to institutionalized oppression and shame. Bisexual people often have difficulty receiving services from the queer community, especially if they are in an opposite gender relationship.

He stated there is a problem with being a young man accessing services because men are automatically considered perpetrators, and there is a tremendous focus on heterosexual non-transgender white women within domestic violence agencies.

There are also issues around ageism and colorism.

Yvette Robles . . .

Yvette Robles is 24 years old and works at the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center. She grew up thinking she was a girl, but people pointed out to her that she was a boy and should act like one. She was mentally and physically abused by her stepmother because of how she acted and felt.

Ms. Robles moved out on her own when she was 18, and started coming out with her feminine feelings. She was told that she was a gay man. She went along with this because there seemed to be no other choice, but she was dissatisfied.

It was during this time that she started using drugs and prostitution, learning at first that this was the life of a transgender girl. It wasn’t until she met a transgender woman who was doing outreach work that she got off the streets, went into counseling, and started doing outreach work of her own to support herself.

Transgender youth need acceptance, jobs, and safe, nonjudgmental places to go for support groups, one-on-one counseling, housing, and medical care.

Hakeem Oseni . . .

Mr. Oseni testified about his journey from Zimbabwe to San Francisco. His journey as a young queer man led him to volunteering at Q Action, the young men’s program at the Stop AIDS Project. He was drawn to this group because of their focus on young men of color and because it provides an opportunity for him and his peers to discuss safe sex and reinforce their safe sex practices.

Mr. Oseni presented some statistics regarding HIV in San Francisco:

Forty-two percent of gay and bisexual men in San Francisco are estimated to be HIV positive.

The City Health Department estimates that 41 percent of Caucasian gay/bi men, 55 percent of African-American gay/bi men, 43 percent of Latino gay/bi men, 35 percent of Asian Pacific Islander gay/bi men, and 50 percent of Native American gay/bi men are infected with HIV in the City.

A recent Health Department study found the virus in more than 12 percent of youth 17 to 22 years old.

The Health Department estimates that a thousand people will be infected with HIV in 1996. Of those, 650 will be gay/bi men. And of those 650 infections, more than half will be gay/bi men under the age of 26. Thirty-three percent of men under 23 report having unprotected anal sex within a year.

Mr. Oseni testified that work at Q Action and Stop AIDS Project has helped to decrease these statistics. Queer youth of color face many issues with coming out, self-esteem, drug use, and alcohol use. From organizations like Q Action, Mr. Oseni has gained a feeling of power that youth can change their community, foster a community, and work to save their community.

Joseph Gentry . . .

Joseph Gentry is a youth of 19 years with HIV. He testified that he is afraid of talking to people who control his life. He has lived in a substandard hotel through a Larkin Street program for nine months. The fire alarm in his room doesn't work. There is no bathroom. All youth, especially queer youth of color, need rights, role models, and choices.

Gretchen Atwood . . .

Gretchen Atwood is 25 years old and identifies as transgender. Gretchen testified about personal experiences, volunteer experiences with career and youth agencies in San Francisco, and offered specific recommendations for the City to make San Francisco a safer and happier place for queer youth.

Gretchen uses men's restrooms and women's restrooms. Gretchen has been stared at, laughed at, and yelled at in women's bathrooms.

Gretchen has also been shown the door many times at job interviews. Despite the privileges of being white, middle class, and having a resume that says Stanford University, job offers have been slow because of Gretchen's gender identity and appearance.

As a volunteer listener on the LYRIC Youth Talk Line (which offers services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning callers 23 and under), Gretchen has answered around 200 to 250 calls, about 35-40 percent of which have been about gender issues. Callers talk about feeling isolation, lack of support from family, lack of support from the school system, and lack of support from the community. Unemployment and homelessness were also brought up often.

As a volunteer speaker on the CUAV (Community United Against Violence) Speakers Bureau, Gretchen has spoken to roughly 15-20 classes in the School District. Gretchen was told not to bring up the words bisexual or transgender in the classrooms because the issues would confuse students.

Gretchen also found on one occasion that the gay/lesbian liaison at one school could barely say the word homosexual. These people need to be educated so they are knowledgeable on bisexuality and transgender issues, not just gay and lesbian ones. Further, Gretchen feels that a "sensitive" straight person is not an adequate substitute for having a queer person for students to talk to.

Gretchen urges youth agencies to pay attention to the issues pertinent to transgender youth.

Doug Au . . .

Doug Au runs the AQU²⁵A program, which is an Asian-Pacific Islander queer and questioning youth group.

Mr. Au feels that the community needs to reach out to a lot of other communities for people who are not in programs or schools and cannot come out because of their social/economic backgrounds and/or because of language barriers.

Mr. Au states that more money is needed for programs, especially effective programs that empower youth and that give them an opportunity to stand up and speak.

Delphine Brodie . . .

Delphine is a bi dyke and pre-op transsexual woman. She testified that there are hundreds of other young transsexual women like her in the city. She is economically marginalized and has no choice but to work in the sex industry and live in the worst kind of poverty.

The job and housing markets have not made room for transgender people. Because there are no affirmative action programs for transgender people, she is forced to stay in the closet, pre-transition, and keep working dead-end jobs or in the sex industry or be tokenized as an out transgender.

Living as a woman for two and a half years, she has experienced, like other transgender people, harassment, assault, and refusal of treatment from law enforcement, health care, and other City or City-funded agencies that are supposed to help San Franciscans.

Jaron Kanegson . . .

Jaron is 25 years old and identifies as transgender, not identifying specifically as male. Employment issues are extremely important, not just for gay and lesbian youth, but especially for those who dress themselves in non-traditional gender presentations, including trans youth and transsexual youth.

Jaron brought up the issue of legalizing sex work. When trans women have to work hard to support themselves, they are harassed and arrested by police. The fines for first offenses are at least three hundred dollars, which just forces people into more hours on the street.

Many trans youth and adults are without health care, and many lesbian and transgender women do not have checkups or seek doctors because they don't know of any who are sensitive to their bodies.

Amy Paul . . .

Amy Paul testified about her experiences with depression in junior high and high school, coming out in college where she found some support networks, and her struggle with homophobic Fundamentalist and born-again Christian family members.

Ms. Paul states that there needs to be more than just an informal network of people. When someone is kicked out of their home, they need a place to go. There has to be support, counseling, scholarships, and grants for people to finish their education. There has to be awareness that people are okay, and that you can have faith and be queer too.

Erick Tyson . . .

Erick Tyson is a 19 year old native of San Francisco. Mr. Tyson wants the Commission and other officials in the City to listen to the stories of the young people in this hearing. These young people will be the next generation of San Francisco, and the City depends on them.

More needs to be done to help gay youth. Mr. Tyson feels that if it weren't for LYRIC and his supportive, loving family, he would have ended up another statistic.

Queer youth need more places to go and have a voice in the City.

Tulani . . .

Tulani spoke about her own experiences as a gay young black woman. She noticed that the Mayor was not at the hearing.

Tulani does not believe there is any queer community. The Castro is not representative of all the differences of queer people. More services are needed for people of color and lesbians.

Kika Solis . . .

Kika is 18 years old and bisexual. Kika testified about the pain and depression that some LGBTQQ youth go through.

Chapter 2 . . .

Introduction to the Public Hearing

Introduction to the Public Hearing

This Chapter describes the Commission's authority and motivation for conducting the public hearing.

Operating Authority

The Human Rights Commission held this public hearing and prepared this report under the jurisdiction of Chapter 12A of the San Francisco Administrative Code, which reads, in part:

"The Commission shall have the power and duty to:

(a) Study, investigate, mediate and hold public hearings on community-wide problems arising in this City and County which may result in inter-group tensions or discrimination."

Objectives

The objectives of this public hearing were:

- A. To learn about the experiences of LGBTQ youth.
- B. To assess the availability and effectiveness of services and resources for LGBTQ youth in the school district; in families, housing programs, and shelter programs; in health services; in youth services; and in the juvenile justice system.
- C. To prepare findings that would document the results of the public hearing.
- D. To propose appropriate recommendations to better serve LGBTQ youth and to address their needs and issues.
- E. To assist in the implementation of the recommendations proposed.

An Overview of the Hearing

Upon recommendation by the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee (LGBTAC), the Human Rights Commission determined that a public hearing was necessary to investigate the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth in San Francisco, and that a report of the hearing with findings and recommendations would be issued. The Youth Commission accepted the Human Rights Commission's invitation to co-sponsor the hearing. The Human Rights Commission directed staff and the LGBTAC to perform logistics for the hearing.

The Commission's Youth Task Force (a sub-group of the LGBTAC and interested community members) held a series of planning meetings to decide the main areas of interest and need for which testimony should be solicited. It was agreed upon that LGBTQ youth should be prioritized by speaking first at the hearing. The testimony of these LGBTQ youth is summarized in Chapter I, "LGBTQ Youth Speaking For Themselves" of this report.

After LGBTQ youth had the first opportunity to speak at the hearing, testimony would be divided into five main focus areas: (1) Youth and the Schools; (2) Family, Housing, and Shelter; (3) Youth and Health; (4) Youth Services; and (5) Juvenile Justice. Many of the needs of an individual LGBTQ young person would overlap among the five areas. Both adults and youth, LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ, were scheduled to speak during these sections. These focus areas were meant to help organize the needs and issues of LGBTQ youth, as discovered during preliminary research and surveys of LGBTQ youth in San Francisco.

The Commission sent letters to the following individuals and organizations to invite

them to speak at the hearing, send a representative, and/or suggest other potential speakers:

The Honorable Abby Abinanti (San Francisco Superior Court), Alfonso Acampora (Walden House), Les Anderson (San Francisco Boys and Girls Club), Dusty Araujo (Lesbian and Gay Parents Association), Robert Atkins (Bobbie's Love & Care), Doug Au (AQU25A-Living Well Project);

Carol Badran (WEDGE Program), Michael Baxter (Special Programs for Youth), Meredith Broome (Pro-Active Youth), the Honorable Willie L. Brown, Jr. (Mayor, City and County of San Francisco), Ken Bukowski (LYRIC);

Donna Camali (Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services), Susan Castillo (Cole Street Youth Clinic), Gary Clarke (YMCA), Jesse Costello-Goode (San Francisco Youth Commission), Brian Cross (Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center);

Gordon Elkins (LYFE); Edgar Flowers Jr. (Probation Department);

Ellen Gavin (Brava! for Women in the Arts), Kevin Gogin (Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth, SFUSD), Yolanda Gonzalez (Diamond Youth Shelter), Julie Graham, Judy Griffin (Youth Guidance Center);

Dr. Sandra Hernandez (SF Health Department), Antigone Hodgins (Bay Area Young Positives), Ruth Hughes (Center for Special Programs);

Ede Imeri (PFLAG); Nancy Kahn (SF PTA/SFUSD), Kate Kendell (National Center for Lesbian Rights); Fred Lau (SF Police Department);

Diane Manning (Larkin Street Youth Center), Salvador Menjivar (Guerrero House), Jeff

Mori (Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families);

Tony Noble (Hospitality House); Henry Ocampo (Chances for Youth/Living Well Project), Lester Olmstead-Rose (CUAV), Kelly O'Neill (Street Survival Project), Sheila Ortiz;

Robert Perez (Stop AIDS Project), Grant Peterson (BANGLE), the Hon. Steve Phillips (SF Board of Education), Joel Robinson (SF Recreation and Parks), Waldemar Rojas (SFUSD), Sandra Ruiz (Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida),

Janet Shalwitz (Health Initiatives for Youth), Michael Wald (Department of Human Services), Greg Walker (Brothers Network), David Weiner (Visitacion Valley Community Center Beacon), Kiki Whitlock (Club Metamorphosis/Asian AIDS Project).

Publicity for the hearing consisted of a press release (See Appendix B) sent to the Commission's media list, and a flyer (See Appendix A) sent to the LGBTAC mailing list, the Youth Task Force, and other community locations where LGBTQQ youth might have access.

Staff prepared press packets and information packets for all press that came to the public hearing.

The public hearing was held in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers in San Francisco's Interim City Hall from 4:30 to 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 26, 1996. The testimony of the public hearing came from LGBTQQ youth, school officials, community members, service providers, and agency and department officials. Speakers were given two minutes to make their presentations. Questions by Commissioners were allowed after each presentation. On September 26, sixty-seven (67) scheduled speakers and three (3)

additional speakers spoke. Written testimony was submitted by twenty-six (26) individuals.

Chapter 3 . . .

Public Testimony

Public Testimony - ORAL

Youth and the Schools

Steve Phillips

President, San Francisco Board of Education

Mr. Phillips provided a summary of some of the current efforts of the school district to be pro-active, friendly, and open and supportive to lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. Particularly, he cited the leadership of Tom Ammiano when he was on the school board, of putting into place counseling programs and opening up the District to community speakers from organizations such as CUAV (Community United Against Violence).

The naming of the Harvey Milk school is another sign of progress.

Mr. Phillips stated that the issues of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are an important priority for the community. This is an issue of morality, not just political correctness or policy. Our society needs to define itself to be inclusive and supportive of all people.

To this end, coalitions need to be built to change institutions. The steps that have been taken have not come without opposition. There is still insecurity and apprehension, so we need to start reiterating these positions within ourselves.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Mr. Phillips stated that the opposition faced in doing this work requires changing the attitudes of people. In that respect, it is important to work together to educate the public to reduce fear and reaction, and with talk radio and newspaper that are attacking the School Board's efforts.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jaicks, Mr. Phillips agreed that implementation is a major problem. Mr. Phillips stated that staff and professional development is the key to overcoming uneven implementation and enforcement from school to school. The School District has started using films in elementary schools as a staff development piece. The goal is to create a critical mass of people who are supportive and can educate others who have not been trained.

Dr. Joyce Fetro

Supervisor of School Health Programs

Speaking on behalf of Superintendent William Rojas

Dr. Fetro was proud in saying that the San Francisco Unified School District is a leader in providing support services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth.

The District's six-year program is the first comprehensive program in the country committed to recognizing and supporting the unique needs of LGBTQQ youth and supporting young people living in gay and lesbian families.

Gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youths are at high risk for low self-esteem, substance abuse, suicide, and other health risks. They often feel excluded in the classroom and in school communities.

The District's program is a comprehensive approach which begins with developmentally appropriate lessons within a District-adopted health education curriculum, addressing family diversity, name-calling, homophobia, and sexual harassment.

In every middle and high school, there is a designated staff person to serve as a safe adult for young people questioning their sexual identity. Licensed counselors are also available to all youth and families.

In some high schools, support groups offer students an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns, and fears.

In response to a question from Commissioner Chey, Dr. Fetro agreed that there is a strong need to provide resources for limited English proficient youths. They have started getting materials translated into Spanish and Cantonese, and will start working with the few bilingual counselors in the District.

Dr. Fetro agreed with Commissioner Chey that there is a shortage of services in many languages. Koreans, for example, do not speak Chinese, so Chinese-speaking counselors will not help them out. She agreed to work with Commissioner Chey to seek help from community-based organizations.

In response to a question from Commissioner Saliba-Malouf, Dr. Fetro explained that after-school hours professional development is not mandated, but there are district-wide professional development days where all staff is on-site. Thus, on seven days during the school year, there is a forum to meet with all staff. Dr. Fetro did not mention how much of that time has been devoted to LGBTQQ youth issues.

Dr. Fetro was not able to respond to Commissioner Saliba-Malouf's follow-up question about the percentage of teachers that participate in these programs. The current focus is on teachers delivering health education curriculum.

In response to a comment and question from Commissioner Martinez, Dr. Fetro agreed that the youth at this hearing had delivered powerful messages, and any way that the District can use the youth to work with youths in the schools will enhance their program. There was no response regarding how the youth can become a part of implementing reforms to policies that are not working.

In response to comments and questions from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Dr. Fetro addressed questions of funding, the delay in getting around to translating materials, and the disparity in services among schools in the District. The District has budgeted 1.2 FTE (full-time equivalent) positions where the primary focus is related to LGBTQQ issues. Safe adults in schools are paid a stipend, but the money is never adequate. It has been difficult to move forward with these programs when the District has lost a lot of funding from a variety of sources.

Dr. Fetro agrees that the District has not been able to meet the language diversity needs of students. The District needs to start working with the community, because internal staff are too far extended to be able to translate materials.

Regarding the disparity among schools in the District, Dr. Fetro states that the new focus will be on school administrators. Any good program requires the support of the administrators to survive.

Youth Commissioner Khounsombath, co-chair of the Hearing, requested that Dr. Fetro relay back to Superintendent Rojas that 1.2 FTE is completely inadequate to address the needs of LGBTQQ students in the entire San Francisco Unified School District.

Larry Alegre

Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators (BANGLE)

Gay and Lesbian Educators (GLUE)

Mr. Alegre has been a teacher for 12 years and recently came out at Cesar Chavez Elementary School where he is an administrator. Mr. Alegre states that attitudes are formed

in elementary school, and that is where the program needs to start.

There must be more aggressive curriculum training for teachers at all levels, especially elementary school. There must be mandated sensitivity training for teachers, administrators, and parents. There must be more gay and lesbian resource people for the District.

Kevin Gogin

Director, Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth of the SFUSD

Crystal Jang

Assistant Director, Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth of the SFUSD

Mr. Gogin provided a summary of the current efforts of Support Services For Sexual Minority Youth, a program that has become a national and international model.

There is currently a designated "gay/lesbian sensitive adult" position identified at each of the 22 middle schools and 20 high schools. These adults receive ongoing training, deliver all health-related services for LGBTQQ students, implement the District's anti-slur policy, assure that District-approved curriculum is being taught, post signs and posters that are printed in 5 languages, and are available to self-identified queer youth and their families.

Last year, all middle school principals received training. This year all 76 elementary school principals will receive an in-service.

Mr. Gogin indicated that the following Tuesday, over 250 teachers, administrators and counselors would attend a three-hour in-service which includes a screening of the film, "It's Elementary," and talking about gay issues in the schools.

Mr. Gogin testified that there is bad news also. On a daily basis, Support Services and the School District are on the defensive from right wing political officials and groups who wish to deny basic rights to queer youth.

Students still feel unsafe on school sites. Stereotypes and discrimination still exist and are expressed publicly.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jaicks, Mr. Gogin stated there was no clear answer about how to deal with teachers that don't carry out the programs. They have gone to site administrators, and/or confronted the teacher directly, but that's all they can do. The only instrument the Support Services office has is mandated training. Mr. Gogin stated that he could not respond as to whether the District has a policy towards the teacher that doesn't carry out instruction; Mr. Gogin deferred to somebody from the Union or an administrator to answer the question.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Ms. Jang provided a wish list for what needs to be done. She wants a mandated policy that all administrators, including the Board of Education, must be trained. All principals, vice principals, counselors, and teachers in the district must be trained.

Ms. Jang asked for more staff, especially translators. She has worked with friends, teachers, and community organizations to ask for the favor of translations, but that should be instituted within the system.

Mr. Gogin stated that there is a need for visuals that respect and show the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and families.

Tom Henning

Teacher, Thurgood Marshal Academic High School

Mentor, Board Member, LYFE program

Mr. Henning testified that the two main obstacles to progress in the District are parents who are ignorant or scared about homosexuality, and a school district that is unwilling to educate them while resisting their prejudices. The District should not allow homophobic parents to intimidate school administrators and teachers. Until this is dealt with, sensitivity trainings, in-services, and added resources will be of little use.

Mr. Henning offers two recommendations: (1) As part of their annual evaluation, school administrators, schools themselves, school sites, administrators, and teachers should be evaluated on their open and active support of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students and staff; (2) Parents of middle and high school students should be regularly taught about the facts of homosexuality.

Meyla Rewin,

Health Resource Specialist at SFUSD

Ms. Rewin testified that safety and comfort are necessities for students in schools. She hears a lot of students calling each other “fag”, “dyke”, or “fairy” in the halls. Many teachers do not enforce the anti-slur policy that exists in the District. Teacher awareness and education is a priority in this area.

The Healthy Schools teams at the middle school level, which include a health liaison, positive alternatives coordinator, and the gay/lesbian sensitive adult, provide a mechanism for working together in school-wide activities, events, and performances.

Ede Imeri,

PFLAG (Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays) Parent

Ms. Imeri is the mother of a gay teenager. Ms. Imeri recounted her experience with the school district when her son attempted suicide four years ago. The Dean of Students at the school suggested that her son should transfer to another school. Gay/lesbian sensitive adults in the schools are not enough. The whole administration has to be informed. Ms. Imeri's son was mugged twice in the same school that an earlier speaker at this hearing had testified she felt safe in.

Ms. Imeri stated that sensitivity trainings must be mandated.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Ms. Imeri stated that each teacher signs a contract to educate students and keep the schools safe. That imposes on teachers an obligation that extends to her gay child, as well as to her five straight children.

Sheila Ortiz

PFLAG Parent

Ms. Ortiz is the mother of three children educated in the San Francisco public schools and has worked in the schools 15 years as a paraprofessional or a volunteer. Ms. Ortiz testified that her daughter came out as a lesbian in her sophomore year of high school. She received a lot of positive support and encouragement from family, friends, and

school, and responded with openness, honesty, and hard work. Ms. Ortiz wishes this was the experience of all students that come out.

The drop-out rate and suicide rate of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth is significantly higher than other youth. Programs to enhance counseling, art, music, and sports can help youth express themselves and feel a part of school. Awareness and sensitivity to difference must be an element of all school staff training.

Camomile de Quelquechose

Lesbian and Gay Parents Association

Mr. de Quelquechose is the father of a five-year-old daughter who just started kindergarten at Buena Vista East Elementary School. He expressed anger from listening to testimony of so many young people whose lives have been nearly ruined from homophobia.

Kids are taught homophobia. They are taught homophobia when one kid calls another a faggot and teachers do nothing. They are taught it when no one in the classroom says anything, especially anything positive, about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. They are taught homophobia when the history of famous people who are lesbian or gay omits any mention that they are gay or lesbian.

Mr. de Quelquechose is sick of the debate about whether the word "lesbian" or "gay" can be said in schools. There should be no debate about whether his daughter can talk about her family.

When other parents say there should be permission slips before a discussion on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender issues, that is telling students that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, is a horrible thing.

The Lesbian and Gay Parents Association has been doing workshops in elementary schools for two years. They've produced a video and have an effective training. But they get no official support for their work. Even though they have a cooperative relationship with the Office of Support Services, there is no official District program to include these parents. They are frustrated by having to outreach to principals, often being rebuffed, when it should be the principals outreaching to them, as parents.

Mr. de Quelquechose submitted a video and transcript into written testimony.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jaicks, Mr. de Quelquechose stated that children also learn homophobia in churches, homes, movies, television, and books. It is universal.

Marcus D'Maria Arana

Speakers Bureau Coordinator, Community United Against Violence

Mr. Arana explained that CUAV is an organization that goes into schools to talk about heterosexism and to demystify homosexuality. He read responses that students have given from these presentations. The responses indicated that for many students, the presentations showed them that LGBTQQ people are human beings. Some of the responses are also hateful, but that simply shows how important it is to continue this work to fight heterosexism.

Mr. Arana testified about his work counseling suicidal youths. More than one-third of all youth suicides are queer and questioning youth. Over the past two weeks, Mr. Arana has counseled two youths who tried to hurt themselves. These two youths did not have a

problem with being queer. It was how they were being treated by people around them.

Mr. Arana posed a series of questions that he wants answered: When will transgender people be allowed to speak in the schools from their own experiences? Why was a CUAV presentation stopped by the principal at Burton school last semester? Why are they not speaking to sixth and seventh graders even though they are approved for grades 6-12? Why aren't all middle and high school health science teachers using CUAV? Why was CUAV only in 14 schools last year when there are 41 middle and high schools in the phone book? Why can't the School District make the jobs at the Office for Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth full-time positions?

Public Testimony - WRITTEN

Youth and the Schools

Larry Alegre

Bay Area Network Gay/Lesbian Educators

Gay/Lesbian United Educators

Teacher/12 years/SFUSD/ Cesar Chavez Elementary School

Mr. Alegre submitted an outline of his recommendations:

- (1) More aggressive mandated curriculum training for teachers of all levels (especially elementary schools) with continued follow-up sessions.
- (2) More aggressive continued mandated sensitivity training for teachers/ administrators/ parents with continued follow-up sessions.
- (3) At least 5 resource teachers in the School District specifically focusing on gay/ lesbian/bisexual/ transsexual/ transgender issues; these resource teachers should have personal contact with all teachers.

Del Anderson

Chancellor, City College of San Francisco

Chancellor Anderson wrote a letter to express her support for the public hearing. She writes that this forum is long overdue. City College prides itself on being an institution of higher learning that welcomes all segments of our diverse community. The College established the first Gay/Lesbian Studies department in the country; the Bi/Gala student club is one of the most active on campus; and they have made a commitment to provide academically relevant and necessary student support services to serve the needs of LGBTQQ youth.

Marcus de Maria Arana

Community United Against Violence

Mr. Arana submitted the text of his speech (see previous section). Appended to the speech is a summary of student evaluations of CUAV speakers in District classrooms.

From January 1 to June 30 1996, CUAV made presentations about heterosexism and demystifying homosexuality to 63 high school and middle school classes:

- On comfort level: 623 students felt very comfortable, 979 comfortable, 97 uncomfortable, 61 very uncomfortable.
- On changing feeling: 659 yes, 1047 no.
- Whether the presentation was helpful: 1540 yes, 124 no
- On overall speaker quality: 850 very good, 767 good, 144 fair, 11 poor, 10 very poor.

During this period, CUAV presentations were made in 16 different schools: Balboa (5 classes), Burbank (7), Burton (4), Downtown (2), Galileo (9), Giannini (1), Lick (4), Lincoln (14), Mann (7), Marshall (4), McAteer (2), Mission (7), Presidio (4), Wallenberg (4), Washington (9), and Woodside (2).

Camomile de Quelquechose
Lesbian and Gay Parents Association

Mr. de Quelquechose submitted the LGPA brochure, "Overcoming Homophobia in the Elementary Classroom," and the transcript and video of, "Both My Mom's Names are Judy" into evidence.

Gina De Vries

Ms. DeVries submitted the text of her speech (see Youth Speaking for Themselves).

Dr. Joyce V. Fetro

On behalf of Dr. Waldemar Rojas, Superintendent of Schools for the SFUSD

Dr. Fetro submitted the text of her speech (see previous section).

Kevin Gogin

Director, Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth of the SFUSD

Mr. Gogin submitted the text of his speech (see previous section).

Ede Imeri

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

Ms. Imeri submitted the text of her speech (see previous section).

Crystal Jang

Assistant Director, Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth of the SFUSD

Ms. Jang submitted a wish list for the office of Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth:

- (1) Funding for visuals and posters reflecting the diversity of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) youth of color.
- (2) Funding for books in different languages addressing GLBT issues; and reflecting GLBT youth of color.
- (3) Funding for peer counselors reflecting the diversity of GLBT youth.
- (4) Funding for translation services for all our materials.
- (5) Mandated trainings for all administrators, counselors, teachers, and staff.
- (6) GLBT youth hearings in different communities with language translation.

Sheila Ortiz

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

Ms. Ortiz submitted the text of her speech (see previous section) .

Meyla Rewin

Health Resource Teacher, SFUSD

Ms. Ruwin submitted the text of her speech (see previous section).

Public Testimony - ORAL

Family, Housing, and Shelter

Thomas Rutherford **San Francisco Department of Human Services**

Mr. Rutherford is the child welfare supervisor of a long-term placement team unit at the San Francisco Department of Human Services. Mr. Rutherford testified about what the Department of Human Services is doing to deal with the population of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

The Department has formed a specialized teen unit to deal with the issues teens face when they prepare for emancipation from the foster care system. One part of the specialized teen unit is devoted to dealing with the homeless teen population.

Mr. Rutherford testified that some of the homeless youth report that they are homeless because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning their sexual identity. Homeless youth are ripe for exploitation.

Mr. Rutherford stated that the Department is committed to serving all children and youth. They are recruiting gay and/or gay-sensitive foster parents. They are working in collaboration with the Homeless Youth Network and other community agencies that outreach to children and youth in crisis.

Flexibility and collaboration will be needed in all systems in order to serve LGBTQ youth.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jaicks, Mr. Rutherford agreed that LGBTQ youth were probably not all treated equally by religious providers that have contracts with the City.

Evelyn Poates **Department of Human Services**

Ms. Poates started working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in 1979 at Huckleberry House. Many homeless youth suffer serious depression, major self-esteem problems, other mental health issues, substance abuse problems, including serious addiction at times, and health problems of many sorts.

Many homeless youth have life-threatening illnesses. They are at high risk for suicide. Many need a lot of support to succeed in mainstream placement and traditional school settings.

One important service that has been in place since 1990 is the recruitment of gay sensitive and lesbian, gay, bisexual foster homes to provide placement services to these young people. Through these relationships, many LGBTQ youth have received positive support and role models that have helped them get through school and work.

Cheryl Deaner **Director, Alternative Family Project**

Ms. Deaner described the work of the Alternative Family Project, a non-profit service agency for families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members. The Project provides individual, couple, and family counseling for queer youth. Queer youth need support in their

psychological well-being, not just physical health and shelter needs.

A good counselor who listens to a young person can help them cross the bridge to the adult world that is often made difficult by the chronic stress of disapproval and condemnation that a young person may face because of their sexual or gender orientation.

Diane Manning **Larkin Street Youth Center**

The Larkin Street Youth Center, a program that works with homeless and run-away youth, offers a continuum of services to youth ages 12 to 23. Services include emergency shelter, outreach, and collaboration with the Department of Public Health to provide medical care.

Ms. Manning testified about the risks that the young people she works with face. Many of the youths left their homes because of sexual or physical abuse. These youths become further isolated out on the streets. In addition, they become targets for discrimination and hate crimes.

The Center is involved in collaborations to provide young people with opportunities. Youth need to be supported in the schools. In Ms. Manning's opinion, the School District is doing good work, but is understaffed. The same is true of programs like LYRIC. There should be more proactive programs for youth.

Reverend Jim Mitulski

Reverend Mitulski is a pastor of a gay and lesbian church. Reverend Mitulski testified that religion is one of the greatest menaces that lesbian and gay youth face.

Many of the young people who come to his church have been taught from childhood to hate themselves. Young people who come out are kicked out of their homes and their churches. This happens across the country and in churches in San Francisco.

Reverend Mitulski has spoken to parents of adolescents with HIV who have asked him why they must choose between their church and their children, when they agonize over whether or not they can be present for their children who are ill or in the dying process.

Reverend Mitulski urges the Commission to keep in mind the needs not only of students in public schools but also students in church schools, and to help ensure they have access to safe places.

Tony Noble **Hospitality House Youth Program**

Mr. Noble is the Health and Support Services Coordinator of Hospitality House Youth Program, which works with homeless and run-away youths in San Francisco. He is a former run-away gay teenager here in San Francisco.

Many of the youth that Mr. Noble works with are LGBTQ youth. Many of their needs are the same as any homeless youth: outreach services, nutritional food, emergency shelter, sheltered and transitional housing that lead to stable independent housing, job training and placement, continuing education, including GED preparation, substance abuse treatment; counseling and other mental health services, including suicide prevention, HIV prevention education, including access to health clinics. For queer youth, these services need to be provided in a way that is sensitive to them and also is proactive and aggressive in

promoting a trusting and accepting environment for one's queerness and homelessness.

Mr. Noble provided several suggestions about how to be more proactive in creating an accepting environment for LGBTQQ youth:

Staff should be trained about the psycho-social needs of queer youth and how to effectively deliver services.

Public spaces, like waiting rooms and treatment offices, should have magazines and posters with queer imagery and queer material.

Agencies and organizations should incorporate queer issues, subjects, and concerns into all programming curriculum and treatments. Mr. Noble provided examples to show that if queer issues can be integrated into curriculum rather than just as a special subject, then LGBTQQ youth who have not yet self-identified as LGBTQQ can feel safer and heterosexual youth can be educated also.

Advertising for queer-specific groups, agencies, and information hot-lines should be advertised all over waiting rooms, in brochures, and in listings. Many queer youth will not directly ask for referrals, but they will write down information they see or hear for themselves.

Kelly O'Neill

Street Survival Project

Ms. O'Neill is the director of Street Survival Project, an employment and training program for young women who are living on their own. Ms. O'Neill testified about the negative impact that homelessness has on employment and schooling. If a young person doesn't have a place to live, it's difficult to get to work on time.

There is a lack of options for queer youth. Group homes don't work for everyone. It's illegal to find your own place to live if you're under 18 and not legally emancipated. A young person needs a job to become emancipated, but it's hard for someone to work unless she has a place to live. Many landlords will not rent to a young person regardless of her legal emancipation.

Another problem is that many young people are hired to become the providers of social services while also being the consumers. This can compromise both their professionalism as providers and their ability to continue to receive services.

Ms. O'Neill offered a few suggestions: (1) Rental assistance for young people, especially young people who are not HIV positive. In Ms. O'Neill's opinion, there are more services available for people who are HIV positive; (2) More jobs that pay living wages for people who are supporting themselves and where people can learn skills; and (3) Group homes that are tenant-run by young people.

Angela Osirio

Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow Group Home

Ms. Osirio is a representative of Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow Group Home, which is a nonprofit organization that is one of the first gay, lesbian, transgender group homes in northern California. Bobbie's Rainbow is a six-day facility that serves young people under 18, providing daily structure, counseling, and weekly therapy.

Tamara Ching

Public Comment

Tamara Ching is a 47- year old transsexual who testified about the lives of queer transgender children who are lost to the streets of San Francisco. Transgender youth have been thrown out or beat out of their homes, ridiculed out of their education, and fired from their jobs.

Ms. Ching testified about the transgender youth who turn to drugs to ease the pain of working the streets for survival. She testified about teenagers who have AIDS who die in the Tenderloin or in a hotel, rather than in a gay or straight hospice.

Ms. Ching urges the Commission to listen to what the youth have said at this public hearing. She cautioned against listening too much to the testimony given at this hearing by youth service providers and City agencies, suggesting that many of them were simply giving their resumés and biographies or doing infomercials about their agencies.

Ms. Ching stated that she will follow what happens after this hearing so she can tell her kids on the street what has taken place and what will be done. If anyone is interested in knowing more about the kids who are on the streets, Ms. Ching offered invitations to come down to the Tenderloin with her.

Brett Van

Public Comment

Mr.Van submitted a written proposal recommending a three-year recovery program for young adults. Mr.Van is 23-years old and has been clean and sober for 90 days.

Mr.Van stated that there are young adults dying out on the streets from drug overdoses, and this is murder. These gay and lesbian young adults are afraid to come into a recovery program full of straight adults. Gay and lesbian young adults need to be recognized; he is working hard to get this program together, but he shouldn't have to—this is something the City and State should make available.

Larry Turner

Public Comment

Mr.Turner testified that he is seeing friends die on the streets. Even if programs are out there, they are not advertised well to get to everybody. Young people need to know that there are people out there who care.

Public Testimony - WRITTEN

Family, Housing, and Shelter

Bobbie Atkins

C.E.O., Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow House

Bobbie Atkins sent the Commission a letter describing the work of Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow House, which was established in November 1995 as Northern California's first group home for gay, lesbian, transgender, and questioning youth.

The House is looking for more social gathering places for safe interaction within the community as well as school, and more role models, mentors, tutors, and support groups. They are also looking for a more positive attitude from their community to help them reach and help LGBTQ youth.

Cheryl Deaner

Project Coordinator, Alternative Family Project

Ms. Deaner provides written testimony about the services for LGBTQ youth provided by the Alternative Family Project, a family service agency for families with LGBT members, including queer youth. AFT provides family counseling and events for LGBT people of all ages.

Ms. Deaner describes the conflict that queer youth may experience in their families and communities because of their sexual or gender orientation. This stress often leads LGBTQ youth to leave home before they have the emotional and practical support to do so. Ms. Deaner explains that a good counselor can enable youth to defend themselves against present conditions, such as poor housing, poverty, racism, ageism, and homophobia; past abuse, including damage to the youth's self image and esteem; and conflicts with the family.

The Alternative Family Project hopes that attention is paid to the psychological well-being as well as the physical well-being of youth facing problems of inadequate housing and shelter.

Thomas Rutherford,

Child Welfare Supervisor, Long Term Placement Teen Unit San Francisco Department of Human Services

Mr. Rutherford submitted the text of his speech (see previous section).

Brett Van

Mr. Van submitted a written recommendation proposing a 3-year intensive program helping HIV-positive people 18-25 years old in substance abuse recovery and independent living.

The 3-year program is divided into 4 phases: (1) 90-day live-in treatment program for substance abuse and HIV/AIDS issues; (2) a 90-day program for the same clients, taking place in the same space, providing vocational and educational rehabilitation; (3) a six-month assisted living program offering counseling and housing support with a focus on re-entry into

independent living; and (4) a two-year after-care and social support program.

Mr. Van recommends the Commission to draft recommendations supporting such a program, and offer the opportunity for Walden House, Baker Places, Larkin Street Youth Center, and BAY Positives to agree to a memorandum of understanding to allow a steering committee to staff and run such a house.

Public Testimony - ORAL

Youth and Health

Dana Van Gorder **San Francisco Department of Public Health**

Mr. Van Gorder is the Lesbian and Gay Health Services Coordinator at the SFPDH. Mr. Van Gorder circulated two documents: (1) A description of a variety of issues that are related to prevention issues, particularly for gay and bisexual men in San Francisco, inclusive of youth, but that Mr. Van Gorder believes has broad applicability to the community; and (2) A listing of Public Health contractual services for sexual minority youth.

In terms of contractual services, DPH is expending approximately \$3 million on community-based agencies, many of them related to HIV prevention.

Mr. Van Gorder explained that a health and mental health service plan in San Francisco needs to continue to empower youth and people of color around a broad constellation of issues: self-esteem, pride, isolation, socio-economics, beauty standards, the speed epidemic, and the inability to envision a future. The sense of empowerment and identity that a person can have about their age, sexuality, and racial identity is extremely important.

Mr. Van Gorder also testified to the importance of finding ways for sexual minority youth and older sexual minority people to learn from one another, experience one another, and respect one another.

Kiki Whitlock **(for Shannon Minter, National Center for Lesbian Rights)**

Ms. Whitlock is the transgender program coordinator for the Asian AIDS Project. She is a postoperative transsexual male to female. When she came out at 16 years old to her mother, her mother wanted to take her to a shrink for psychological problems.

Many transgender youth and other lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are slapped with the Diagnostic Statistic Manual label, "Gender Identity Disorder," if they show signs of being too feminine if they are males, or too masculine if they are females. At an early stage, young people may be thrown into mental institutions.

Ms. Whitlock wants people to know that these practices are still happening and that they need to be stopped. There need to be more services for transgender youth and other questioning youth, as well as services for the larger lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Ruth Hughes **Center for Special Problems**

Ms. Hughes provided a historic perspective of where sexual minority services came from in San Francisco in the 1970s to the present. She states that the most important priority is to support the training of people to unlearn homophobia.

Julie Graham

Ms. Graham is a therapist who works with young people, including those with HIV. She was one of the co-founders of BAY Positives, which is an organization to empower young people living with HIV to serve themselves.

Ms. Graham clarified that mental health services for youth should not just be aimed at the young persons. Mental health services should play a critical role in the lives of parents, teachers, administrators, and people in churches.

Because heterosexism is the root to so many of the problems heard today in testimony, fighting these problems requires educating anyone who works with a child, and challenging the assumptions they are making about the child.

Renee Smith **Walden House**

Ms. Smith is the coordinator of adolescent mental health services at Walden House, which is a residential treatment facility that serves dual diagnosis (substance abuse and psychiatric problems) teenagers ages 13 to 17. Of the 60 youth served at any given time at the two facilities in the City, between 10 to 20 percent self-identify as queer or questioning.

Ms. Smith posed a hypothetical example to illustrate the number of people that a young person interacts with when they go through the system; from family to juvenile hall, residential program, and foster care, a young person will encounter many people, who should be sensitized to gay/lesbian issues.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson regarding the value of segregated recovery programs for gay youth, Ms. Smith stated that she didn't think it was needed across the board, but in some instances, especially with young men, it might provide greater safety.

Larry Turner **BAY Positives**

Mr. Turner is a member and volunteer at BAY Positives, speaking on behalf of the executive director of BAY Positives. Mr. Turner has been diagnosed with AIDS for one year, and has been living with HIV since he was 14.

Young adults with HIV and AIDS need more places they can feel comfortable and safe, as well as a place where they can go to talk and relate with other young adults about similar issues.

BAY Positives has provided Mr. Turner with case management, one-on-one counseling, emotional support, and recreational opportunities, as well as support groups.

Mr. Turner feels that there are not services out there for young adults. There is a lot of prevention work, but not a lot of support for young adults when they are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS. Too many young adults feel lost and alone. There must be opportunities for young adults to help each other survive and live with HIV and AIDS.

Henry Ocampo **Living Well Project**

Mr. Ocampo is the Youth Prevention Leader at the Living Well Project. Mr. Ocampo testified about the Chances for Youth Program, which is the first collaborative of its kind between four agencies that deal with HIV prevention for queer and questioning youth of color, 25 and under. The four participating agencies are Brothers Network, Living Well Project, Larkin Street Youth Center, and Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida.

This collaboration started last year and has already accomplished much. The col-

laborative has created a community for youth of color, and communities for specific youth of color, such as the API community, the African-American community, and the Latino community.

There are peer-run, peer-led programs, where all of the programs are led by youth-of-color. The programs include young people who are multi-gendered, bisexual men and women, transgender, gay, and lesbian.

Mr. Ocampo listed the needs of the program:

Primary support is needed from management and sponsoring agencies to integrate youth programs into agencies.

Youth providers need technical assistance for youth providers in terms of contract management, evaluations, and servicing youth under 18.

Youth of color need a community space.

More funding is needed in the following areas: basic food, shelter, and clothing; female specific programs; transgender programs; collaborative projects for youth of color; and for queer youth of color living with HIV.

Shivaun Nestor

WEDGE Program

Ms. Nestor testified about the WEDGE Program, a health department project that provides HIV prevention education to youth ages 12 to 18. The program believes that disempowerment and lack of self-esteem are at the root of the rapid spread of HIV among youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Schools are still not safe places for sexual minority youth. Mandated and expanded trainings for administrators and teachers, particularly in disciplines outside the sciences and health are needed.

Youth also need community-based support. All youth service providers need training to assist them in dealing with their own homophobia and to sensitize them to the needs of queer youth. Such training should be required of all youth-serving and family-parent programs that receive City funding.

Public Testimony - WRITTEN

Youth and Health

Julie Graham, MFCC

Ms. Graham submitted the full text of the presentation she had planned to deliver at the hearing. (See Previous Section). In her written testimony, Ms. Graham provides some background information to support her oral testimony that heterosexism is the root of the problems that face LGBTQQ youth. Any attempt to help LGBTQQ youth should be aimed at battling heterosexism, and should target all the people involved in oppressing youth, not just on the young person themselves.

Shannon Minter National Center for Lesbian Rights

Mr. Minter submitted an information sheet, "Diagnosis and Treatment of Gender Identity Disorder in Children." This information sheet provides a representative overview of the published clinical literature on the diagnosis and treatment of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) in children and summarizes and comments on the controversy over current clinical approaches to gender variant children.

Although the majority of adults diagnosed with GID are self-identified transsexuals who usually must seek out and receive a diagnosis of GID in order to obtain hormones and/or sex reassignment surgeries, the legal and practical control of parents or other adults create different implications for the diagnosis in children and youth. Typically, treatment of GID in children and youth is designed to eliminate or minimize cross-gender behavior and/or identification, with the short term goal of alleviating social ostracism and the long term goals of preventing adulthood transsexualism or homosexuality.

Mr. Minter also submitted a memo suggesting two findings and two recommendations that recognize the absence of public health services (including hormone therapy) for transgender youth and the fact that the diagnosis of GID is often necessary to provide hormone therapy and other medical services to self-identified transgendered and transsexual youth, while nonetheless advocating against the use of GID diagnosis to change or manipulate a youth person's actual or perceived homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexualism, or transgenderism.

Daphne Scholinski

Ms. Scholinski submitted an article, "After-Wards" detailing her experiences as a survivor of psychiatric abuse in mental institutions. At the age of 14, Ms. Scholinski was labeled a 'mental case' and confined to a psychiatric institution in Chicago, Illinois. Her primary diagnosis was 'gender identity disorder' because she was deemed to not be "a normal female." From then until her 18th birthday, she experienced solitary confinement, heavy medication, physical restraint, and witnessed abuses like shock treatment against other patients.

Ms. Scholinski also submitted a press release about the upcoming publication of her memoirs, "The Last Time I Wore a Dress," which details her "unjust incarceration in a mental hospital for what her psychiatrist called 'failure to identify as a sexual female.'"

Ms. Scholinski also submitted an article by Richard Green, M.D., J.D., "Gender Identity Disorder in Children."

Claire Leigh Skiffington
Services Coordinator - Revenue Maximization
Department of Public Health

Ms. Skiffington submitted a letter stating that reality-based public health is based on compensation from third-party (and beyond) support. In other words, GID is not a compensated treatment diagnosis, henceforth, clinicians/providers usually revert to other more critical diagnoses such as Dissociative Identity Disorder, Bipolar Disorder/Recent-Severe, Acute Distress Disorder, and Identity Problem. She believes that it is "unproven and too strong" to say that health providers in San Francisco pathologize transgender youth.

Christine R. Tayleur

Ms. Tayleur submitted a letter to state that the December 12, 1996 Findings and Recommendations of the Commission "regarding Gender Identity Disorder in Adolescence are fraudulent." They are not substantiated by testimony contained in the transcripts. She argues that the city and county mental health department have provided information clarifying that they do not pay for institutionalization under GID, and therefore, the HRC has no jurisdiction.

Dana Van Gorder
Department of Public Health

Mr. Van Gorder submitted a document, "Addressing the Emotional Well-Being of San Francisco' Gay and Bisexual Men," and a chart of DPH Contractual Services totaling \$2,943,074 for Sexually Questioning Youth, Fiscal Year 1996-97.

Public Testimony - ORAL

Youth Services

Winna Davis

Senior Grants Manager, Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families

Ms. Davis provided a summary of programs and services for LGBTQQ youth that are funded by MOCYF.

MOCYF provides funding to LYRIC, the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center. MOCYF funding goes to the LYRIC Youth Talkline and the Afterschool Program.

The Afterschool Program is a drop-in center for participants from all neighborhoods in the City. The economic, housing status, ethnic, and racial composition of these participants is quite diverse. MOCYF's funding provides for LYRIC to serve about 150 youths between the ages of 12 to 17 every month.

The Youth Talkline is a peer support phone line for LGBTQQ youth. An estimated 3600 callers age 18 and under contact the line each year. The Talkline connects callers to a supportive community of peers. During off hours, there is a 24-hour recording that provides information about events and services available to LGBTQQ youth.

MOCYF also funds the Queer Youth Job Training Collaborative, which provides job training and career development skills to LGBTQQ youth ages 17 and younger. This program serves about 235 youths in San Francisco.

In response to a question from Youth Commissioner Khounsombath, Ms. Davis did not know whether MOCYF allocates funding commensurate to the percentage of queer youth in the City. Ms. Davis stated that MOCYF is currently putting together an MIS system which can provide the sort of demographic information, statistics, and percentages that Commissioner Khounsombath requested.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Ms. Davis was unaware of whether LGBTQQ youth had transportation problems or whether a voucher system was ever in place.

Mitchell Thompson

Assistant Recreation Director, San Francisco Department of Recreation and Parks

Mr. Thompson testified regarding what Recreation and Parks currently offers for LGBTQQ youth, what needs to change, and what he would personally like.

Currently, Recreation and Parks offers a site designated as a safe space for LGBTQQ youth, located at Eureka Valley Recreation Center, at 100 Collingwood Street in the Castro. There is a part-time assistant recreation director at that site that provides up to 20 hours a week of programming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. This position also serves as the Recreation and Parks liaison to LYRIC. Programming includes sports, art classes, games, and a safe space to hang out. Programs take place in the afternoon and evenings. On Friday nights, a safe space is offered until 10:00 p.m. Saturday programs have also started.

Mr. Thompson testified that Recreation and Parks needs full-time programming designated to LGBTQQ youth. There needs to be a full-time recreation director sympa-

thetic to the needs, issues, and concerns of LGBTQQ youth.

Currently, no sensitivity training is offered on LGBTQQ youth in the Department. Mr. Thompson states that recreation staff directors and administrators all need this training. These people are in contact with hundreds of young people a week.

Recreation and Parks also needs outreach and interdepartmental cooperation with the County Office of Education, the Department of Social Services, and other youth programs.

Recreation and Parks needs to offer more safe sites. Throughout the City, programs, events, and information should be available to LGBTQQ youth. Funding should be designated specifically for LGBTQQ youth.

Mr. Thompson would like to see a full-time administrative level director of LGBTQQ youth programming for Recreation and Parks to insure quality programming at designated safe sites, to plan and implement departmental sensitivity training, and to promote outreach and ensure information accessibility to employees and youth participants.

Mr. Thompson would also like to see a summer camp for LGBTQQ youth.

Mr. Thompson would like more of a department-wide focus on social issues for youth at risk, including issues relating to homelessness, poor self-esteem, drug abuse, and health.

Mr. Thompson wants to be allowed to use the word "queer" in relation to the Recreation and Parks department, when it is used in a manner that respects and acknowledges the queer youth community.

Meredith Broome

Program Director, Queer Youth Job Training Collaborative

Ms. Broome testified about the work of the Collaborative. The Collaborative is five agencies: LYRIC, BAY Positives, the Brothers Network, Community United Against Violence, and the Center for Young Women's Development Street Survival Project. The San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco libraries are also a part of the collaborative.

The goal of the Collaborative is to give job training and employment to queer youth. It's important for youth to have a safe place to learn essential employment skills. It's hard to come to work if you're depressed or suicidal. It's hard to concentrate on learning new skills if you didn't have a place to sleep the night before.

Many of the young people that come to the Collaborative are unstably housed. They are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Being employed at a living wage is one of the most important things possible for these young people. The program pays at higher than minimum wage so that the youths involved have a better chance of making it.

The Collaborative also recognizes that unstably housed youths are facing more than just a housing problem. Thus, they work to help address the mental health, food, and transportation needs of these young people.

Ken Bukowski

Executive Director, LYRIC: Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center

Mr. Bukowski provided a summary of how LYRIC has grown over the past eight years into a program that provides an after-school drop-in program five days a week, recreational

activities, support groups, videos, and lots of other activities for youths under 18; a youth talkline that received 12,000 calls last year; an information line; a young men's HIV prevention program; a young women's program, that provides health programming and health workshops for young women; a job training program; a leadership training program; and an academic tutoring program.

Mr. Bukowski stated that despite all these programs, it is still not enough. LYRIC is just one of the few places that LGBTQQ youth in the City and in the entire Bay Area can go to be safe.

Mr. Bukowski reports that seventy percent of the youth who come to LYRIC are youth of color. Queer youth come from every social and economic group in the City, and one agency can't serve them all.

Mr. Bukowski recommended some changes that need to be made:

Programming offered by LYRIC needs to be supported and expanded.

New programming is needed to meet other needs, like housing, mental health services, counseling programs, basic food, and shelter.

Straight-identified service providers need to be pushed to be safe places for queer youth also, so queer youth don't only have to depend on queer youth service providers.

Mr. Bukowski finished his comments by talking about the upcoming Youth Summit. If Mayor Brown wants to make San Francisco a youth-friendly city, Mr. Bukowski hopes that with the support of the Human Rights Commission, the Youth Commission, and the Board of Supervisors, that San Francisco will also be a *queer-youth* friendly city.

In response to a question from Commissioner Salazar-Hobson, Mr. Bukowski stated that even though LGBTQQ youth have been amazingly resourceful in getting themselves to LYRIC, it would be great if queer youth could get free Fast Passes.

David Weiner

Director, Visitation Valley Community Beacon

Mr. Weiner is the director of the Visitation Valley Community Beacon, a community center located within a school that offers a collaborative approach to youth development. Mr. Weiner summarized the services currently offered at the Community Beacon, including an after-school program, recreation program, family resource center, outreach, and collaborations with the various City departments, universities, and youth service agencies. Mr. Weiner did not mention how LGBTQQ youth are included in these services.

Mr. Weiner testified that the Beacon has become a Healthy Start operational site, in partnership with Visitation Valley Middle School. Healthy Start funding, along with matching MOCYF funds, have given them the opportunity to emphasize health, wellness, and social support for children, school staff, and the community. According to Mr. Weiner, the Beacon is developing relationships with the Health Department and the School District that will bring comprehensive and sustainable health and mental health services to Visitation Valley.

Mr. Weiner stated that these health programs are often their first link to gay and lesbian youth. The "school site" person is available to provide service to students at the Beacon site. The health program provides counseling and information through school nurses. According to Mr. Weiner, on-site mental health services "provides a safe space for gay and lesbian youth to work out the sometimes critical issues related to their status."

Mr. Weiner stated that the Beacon is committed to serving all youth in Visitation Valley, and hopes to be "supportive, attractive, and useful to all elements" of the community.

Jade Kwan

Club Metamorphosis, Asian AIDS Project

Jade Kwan is a part of Club Metamorphosis, the transgender support group at the Asian AIDS Project. Ms. Kwan testified about the sadness, conflict, and anger she felt growing up.

Ms. Kwan considers herself one of the lucky ones, because she found Club Metamorphosis, a nurturing and loving environment. It was there that she started to grow and love through the support of her transgender community.

She no longer asks why she is the way she is. As a youth, she feels she has a right to be loved and cared for; she wants fulfillment for all her brothers and sisters in the community.

Ms. Kwan thinks support groups are helpful because family and society may not be accepting. Support groups also allow transgender youth to share information to the benefit of each other. Ms. Kwan cited AQU³⁵A as a model safe space for transgender and queer youth. They made her feel welcomed there.

Ms. Kwan wants to see more peer leaders and role models, and more health educators. There is only one health educator at Asian AIDS Project, and there are a lot of transgender people out there.

Ms. Kwan recommended more supportive and sensitive medical care to help transgender youth become more of who they feel like inside. The more comfortable transgender youth feel, the more they can contribute to the growth of San Francisco.

Ms. Kwan wants people to recognize that transgender people are hard-working, caring and loving people, and that they are a diverse community.

Ms. Kwan appreciates the presence of the Youth Commission and the Human Rights Commission at this hearing and thinks it would be helpful for the City's leadership to recognize transgender youth. Ms. Kwan is upset that the Mayor was not present at the hearing.

Peter Russell

YMCA of San Francisco

Dr. Russell is the coordinator of the Gay and Lesbian Teen Intervention Program of the YMCA of San Francisco. The GALTIP program provides individual, couple, group, and family counseling; programming and outreach to schools; and training to youth service providers to create more accepting environments for LGBTQQ youth.

Dr. Russell also provides training consultation to San Mateo County Schools to create educational environments that are safer for LGBTQQ youth. Schools remain dangerous environments for queer and questioning youth who experience blatant discrimination, social isolation, daily harassment, physical threats, and assault. Dr. Russell testified that many victims of gay bashing remain silent to avoid stigma.

Dr. Russell stated that anti-homophobia in schools is essential to creating healthy learning environments for young people to stop learning the values of hatred, bigotry, and discrimination.

Dr. Russell summarized some of what needs to happen in the schools: faculty, staff, and students must intervene when others are harassed; school conditions should allow faculty and staff to come out without negative consequences; gay/straight alliances in the schools should be created and maintained; the confidentiality of students who confide in

teachers, staff, and administrators should be respected; teachers, administrators, and staff should be trained to better understand the needs of gay and lesbian students; diversity and sexual orientation should be addressed openly and sensitively in the health education curriculums; and school libraries must maintain accurate and up-to-date information about sexuality.

In response to a question from Commissioner Khounsombath, Dr. Russell stated that even though this program is from the San Francisco YMCA, services are geared toward San Mateo County. Dr. Russell explains that this is because of the number of services already available in San Francisco.

Jose Garcia **LYFE Program**

Jose Garcia was a peer educator with the LYFE program when it was federally funded at the Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services. The program is no longer funded, after a five-year grant. Currently a community advisory board has taken the program and is trying to bring it back.

Mr. Garcia testified that the greatest need right now is funding in order to implement the great ideas that are out there.

Mr. Garcia described the basic need for the mentoring program. With all the current problems facing queer youth, including the use of speed, drugs, aging, and AIDS, an intergenerational program can help bridge the gap between older and younger queers, thus providing young people with different avenues for resolution when they don't feel like they can talk to their young friends.

Mr. Garcia pointed out that many queer youth do not live with their parents and do not have adult role models in their lives. Because it can be hard for young people to meet older gay people, it's especially valuable that LYFE offers a safe atmosphere for young people to meet older people who can help them in the struggle to live decently and productively in society.

Michael Spencer **Public Comment**

Mr. Spencer thanked the Commission for the hearing and urged the Commission to take to heart what had been said by every young person.

Public Testimony - WRITTEN
Youth Services

Peter C. Russell, Ph.D.

**Coordinator, San Francisco Peninsula and Stonestown YMCA's
Gay and Lesbian Teen Intervention Program (GALTIP)**

Dr. Russell submitted the text of his speech (See Previous Section).

Mitchell Thompson

**Assistant Recreation Director, Eureka Valley Recreation Center
San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department**

Mr. Thompson submitted the text of his speech (See Previous Section).

Public Testimony - ORAL

Juvenile Justice System

Sergeant Michael Jefferies **San Francisco Police Department**

Sgt. Jefferies summarized the general youth programs run by the Program Section of the San Francisco Police Department. The programs, not necessarily specific to LGBTQQ youth, include recreation, outdoor activity, cultural activity, mentoring programs, and tutorial programs. This program serves 27,000 youth in San Francisco, working closely with the school district and with community-based organizations. No information was given regarding LGBTQQ youth participating in these programs.

Sgt. Jefferies is also a member of the Youth and Education Committee of the Human Rights Commission. He stated that the Committee is currently taking a look at violence in the public school system by collecting data from City and community agencies to identify some of the major issues relating to violence.

Sgt. Jefferies submitted into written testimony several articles and handouts, including a handbook entitled, "Respect," created by youth and police of the city of Seattle, WA. Sgt. Jefferies stated that he thought it might be a good guide for addressing some of the issues raised in this hearing.

In response to a question raised by Commissioner Jaicks following Melinda Mills' testimony, Sgt. Jefferies agreed to make sure sensitivity trainings are being conducted for the police. In his 25 years of service, Sgt. Jefferies has seen these trainings already, and currently there is an officer who does these sensitivity trainings through in-services.

Melinda Mills **Juvenile Probation**

Ms. Mills testified that as a matter of statistics, LGBTQQ youth account for only 0.04 percent of youth under 18 who are arrested in the City and County of San Francisco and thus brought through Juvenile Probation. Ms. Mills recognized that there may be many LGBTQQ youth who do not want to identify as LGBTQQ in the juvenile justice system.

Ms. Mills stated that self-identified LGBTQQ youth that go through the system are often there for crimes of need, such as stealing or prostitution for staying alive.

Ms. Mills commended the City and County for services they are currently providing, but sees the need for more services.

Ms. Mills recommends that the Department work with CUAV to provide counseling and educational services to young people who are involved in hate crimes against LGBTQQ people.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jaicks, Ms. Mills agreed to recommend sensitivity training for all juvenile probation staff.

Judy Griffin **Director, San Francisco Juvenile Hall**

Ms. Griffin stated that she would submit written testimony because of the lateness of

the hour. She noted that Juvenile Hall sees less than half of the youth that are referred through the Juvenile Justice Department. For the few youth who self-identify as LGBTQQ, Juvenile Hall relies on the staff from Michael Baxter's Special Programs for Youth to provide them assistance.

In response to questions from Commissioner Rochon, Ms. Griffin clarified that each young person in juvenile hall is kept in a separate room by themselves. Thus, it is unclear to her why a previous speaker [Adriana San Pedro, Youth Speaking for Themselves] complained about being singled out by placement in a single room. Ms. Griffin added that under some circumstances, such as gang orientation, special arrangements are made for youth who are in danger of harm from others.

Michael Baxter

Assistant Director, Special Programs for Youth

Michael Baxter is the assistant director of Special Programs for Youth (SPY), which is the largest youth program funded by the Department of Public Health and provides all of the health services to youth who are incarcerated.

Very few self-identified LGBTQQ youth come forth in the institutional setting of the Juvenile Justice system. According to Mr. Baxter, this should prompt us to question the role of institutional homophobia.

Mr. Baxter testified that he has seen progress in the treatment of queer youth in detention. Currently, there are a number of out and proud lesbian and gay professionals employed by SPY. These professionals can be positive role models for youth and can also be educators for youth and staff who continue to demonstrate homophobic attitudes.

Twelve years ago when Mr. Baxter started working with the Department, there was a policy that all male youths who self-identified as gay were immediately housed on the maximum security unit. That policy is no longer in effect. The current policy is to mainstream LGBTQQ youth. Only if mainstreaming is not going to be in their best interests will a youth be put in maximum security. Mr. Baxter states that when this policy needs to be pursued, the small number of youths who are put in these units receive special, positive attention.

SPY has made concerted efforts to outreach to LGBTQQ youth in detention. Every youth that comes into the institution gets a packet of information about SPY's services. The packet includes information about how to access out LGBTQQ staff and LGBTQQ referrals for when they leave the institution.

Mr. Baxter offers three basic recommendations: (1) all staff at the Youth Guidance Center should receive an annual mandatory sensitivity training; (2) all youth in detention should receive regular education by CUAV and other community agencies; and (3) all youth committed to YGC for hate crimes should receive special intervention with SPY and other community agencies.

Maria Cora

Special Programs for Youth

Maria Cora is a health educator at SPY who has provided health education services to young women in detention at YGC for seven years. Ms. Cora reiterated the recommendations and information provided by Michael Baxter.

Additionally, Ms. Cora acknowledged the courage of young women in detention who come out as lesbians and bisexuals, given the societal heterosexism and the added isolation and vulnerability of being a detainee.

Public Testimony - WRITTEN

Juvenile Justice System

Michael Baxter, MSW

Assistant Director, Special Programs for Youth, SPDPH

Mr. Baxter submitted the text of his speech (See Previous Section).

Judith Griffin

Director, San Francisco Juvenile Hall

Ms. Griffin submitted the text of her speech (See Previous Section).

Sergeant Michael Jefferies

Youth Program Coordinator, Police Department

Sgt. Jefferies submitted several documents to support his oral testimony: summary information about the Department's Juvenile Division; a General Order regarding the Department's Juvenile Policies and Procedures; a General Order regarding the Department's Psychological Evaluation of Juveniles; a summary of Department Youth Programs; a report on Youth-Police Relations prepared in October 1995; and Respect, a handbook created by the youth and police of the City of Seattle.

Chapter 4 . . .

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

The Human Rights Commission, having conducted a public hearing on September 26, 1996 on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth, and having considered verbal and written testimony, hereby finds:

1. LGBTQQ youth often face severe isolation, harassment and discrimination.
2. A crisis still exists in San Francisco and in every city where society continues to discriminate against LGBTQQ people of all ages, and transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, and heterosexism is rampant and can affect any and every young person regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
3. The ability of participating LGBTQQ youth to help plan this public hearing and testify before the Commission is a testament to their own courage. For many LGBTQQ youth, discrimination, stigmatization, and oppression continue to silence them from participating in events such as this hearing.

Youth and Schools

4. LGBTQQ students who receive adequate resources, services, and support at school from teachers, administrators, staff, and student alliances report that they gain confidence, pride, and self-esteem. Unfortunately, the majority of LGBTQQ students report that they receive inadequate or no services, support, and/or resources from public and private schools.
5. Nationally 45% of gay males and 20% of lesbians experience verbal or physical assault in high school. Studies have failed to provide statistics regarding verbal and physical assault against bisexual and transgender youth. 28% of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth who experience verbal or physical assault based on their sexual orientation are forced to drop out of high school because of the harassment they experience.
6. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth because of societal oppression and discrimination. Studies have failed to provide statistics regarding transgender youth suicide. There have already been a number of suicide attempts in the San Francisco Unified School District during the current 1996-97 school year.
7. In 1990 the San Francisco Unified School District ("District") created the Office of Support Services for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth (renamed the Office of Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth) within the School Health Department. This program has been a national model for serving the pressing needs of sexual minority students.
8. The Office of Support Services has created a curriculum to encompass education issues,

counseling concerns, healthy sexuality development, substance abuse prevention, violence reduction, personal and social skills development, and HIV education; the Office has also implemented curriculum training, sensitivity workshops, and designated a gay/lesbian sensitive adult in every high school and middle school in the District.

9. The Office of Support Services is currently staffed at 1.2 FTE to meet the diverse and comprehensive needs of all LGBTQQ youth in all high schools and middle schools in the District. This current level of staffing does not meet the overwhelming needs of LGBTQQ youth in schools.
10. There is one designated “lesbian and gay” sensitive adult at each school site in the District. These adults are resources for students who are coming out or want to discuss LGBTQQ issues. However, a student in the District interacts with numerous teachers, staff, and administrators every day at school. All students, including LGBTQQ students, have the right to feel safe with each and every teacher, staff person, and administrator with whom they interact during the course of the day, not just the one designated “sensitive” adult.
11. A teacher’s obligation to teach students includes the responsibility to make classrooms and schools a safe place for all students, including LGBTQQ students, to be able to learn.
12. Currently, there is no LGBTQQ resource person for the 76 elementary schools in the District. The dangerous doctrines of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism are taught to children from a young age through a pervasive litany of social outlets, which sometimes include media, schools, family, churches, and peers. Education which addresses these hateful doctrines and aims to change institutions and attitudes needs to occur at an early stage.
13. Violence is a pervasive problem in the schools for all students. LGBTQQ students continue to feel unsafe at school, as do children of LGBTQQ parents. These students are often afraid to even check out books that deal with LGBTQQ issues from the school library. Targets of violence also include “feminine” boys and “masculine” girls who may or may not be LGBTQQ.
14. Parents and families that are LGBTQQ report that their children continue to face harassment in the schools. Reports of harassment have included ridicule, verbal attacks, threats of violence, and physical assaults.
15. The demand for support services for LGBTQQ youth has increased as the Office of Support Services has done more outreach within the schools. These demands have been for more staff and basic educational materials.
16. The school district’s anti-slur policy is not enforced consistently. Teachers and administrators who fail to discipline or curtail verbal assault and harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity enable offending students to create a hostile environment for all students, especially students who are, or are perceived to be, LGBTQQ. When a student

calls another student a “faggot” or a “dyke,” and a teacher doesn’t do anything about it, they are effectively instructing all students that homophobia is an acceptable social value.

17. There is a perceived lack of sensitivity on the part of some administrators, faculty, staff, and students regarding LGBTQQ youth issues.
18. Homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic members of the community continue to oppose valuable school efforts to educate students about LGBTQQ issues. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction of requests for presentations by groups such as Community United Against Violence, a community-based agency which provides school-approved classroom presentations and speakers on lesbian and gay issues. Of the 41 high schools and middle schools in the District, only 14 schools had these kinds of presentations during the 1995-96 school year.
19. Approved curriculum for presentations in schools does not yet include information about transgender lives and issues. This contributes to the invisibility of transgender people in society. Further, the needs of students who identify as transgender or who may be questioning their gender identity are effectively excluded from these lessons.
20. School-related activities, such as social events, social organizations, school dances, that are heterosexual, homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic, can alienate LGBTQQ students from participating and being a part of the school community.
21. Some administrators have discouraged the presentation of District-approved displays regarding LGBTQQ youth and their issues.
22. LGBTQQ adults in the school system who come out regarding their sexual orientation and/or gender identity can become a valuable source of support for LGBTQQ students. Many LGBTQQ faculty, staff, and administrators are not able to come out because they are afraid of losing their jobs, being harassed, or being subjected to administrative penalties.
23. Services and materials regarding LGBTQQ issues exist only in English. This excludes LGBTQQ students who do not speak English or who are more comfortable speaking about personal issues in another language.
24. The availability of sensitive counselors and the training for counselors is insufficient to meet the overwhelming needs of LGBTQQ students. Overall, the ratio of counselors to students in the District is unacceptably low.
25. Many students in the District have not been exposed to family diversity lessons in the classroom, even though they have been approved for the curriculum. Family diversity includes, but is not limited to, gay parents, lesbian parents, bisexual parents, transgender parents, adoptive parents, one-parent families, extended kinship relationships, cooperative child raising, and families with disabled members.
26. LGBTQQ students and parents report that it is often difficult to report incidences of ha-

harassment or assault based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Students and families are not given a clear grievance procedure. One parent who went to the Dean of a school was told that her gay son, who was being harassed and assaulted, should consider transferring to a different school.

27. LGBTQ youth and children of LGBTQ families can be stigmatized when the schools require a permission slip to discuss LGBTQ issues or when LGBTQ issues are disproportionately discussed only in health classes. Requiring a permission slip sends a message to all students and families that LGBTQ issues are embarrassing or abnormal.
28. The SFUSD expressed its desire to reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to LGBTQ students. Subsequent to the hearing, the School Board passed a resolution, "Meeting the Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students" on October 22, 1996.
29. The Parents Teachers Association were invited but did not attend the Hearing. The PTA stated that they did not have anyone with expertise on the matter and could not add to the discussion. The Commission is disappointed and troubled by the dangerous neglect of addressing the needs of LGBTQ youth demonstrated by the PTA.
30. Many LGBTQ youth attend City College, and other colleges, universities, licensing and certification programs in the City. These students also need support and services to ensure safe environments for learning.

Family, Housing, and Shelter

31. A disproportionate number of homeless youth are LGBTQ. Any attempts to address the needs of homeless LGBTQ youth must examine the specific issues of LGBTQ youth as well as the general issue of homelessness as a social problem.
32. A major cause of homelessness and "runaway" LGBTQ youth is the inability of the family to deal with the young person's sexual orientation or gender identity. In the home this can take the form of harassment, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual assault, rejection, or kicking the young person out of the home. Programs that lack a component to deal with the family virtually ignore one of the main root causes of homelessness.
33. LGBTQ youth reported that their parents rejected them due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Physical and verbal abuse by parents is a common response.
34. Although youth almost always have some conflict with the families they were raised by, for LGBTQ youth these conflicts are often overshadowed by the chronic stress of disapproval and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
35. This added layer of chronic stress may result in youth leaving home before they have the emotional and practical support to do so. Without a supportive introduction to the realities

of adult living, LGBTQ youth are at high risk for being extremely vulnerable as they make their way into the adult world.

36. Religion and spirituality can play both positive and negative effects in the lives of young people. When religion plays a negative role in the lives of LGBTQ youth, it can contribute to feelings of alienation from the family and community of LGBTQ youth.
37. LGBTQ youth who are homeless are in particular need because services and programs in schools and youth service agencies do not directly address their needs.
38. LGBTQ youth of color and LGBTQ youth with children of their own are often overlooked and underserved by family, housing, and shelter programs
39. Many homeless LGBTQ youth live in the Polk Street area, North of Market; however, homeless LGBTQ youth also live in other parts of the City.
40. Many LGBTQ youth face rental discrimination. Even when an LGBTQ young person has gone through the process of legal emancipation, they encounter difficulty from landlords who do not want to rent to someone under 18. This is in addition to the hardship that young people have in amassing the reserve finances necessary for move-in costs, such as first and last months rent, security deposit, and cleaning deposit.
41. Transgender youth particularly face heavy employment discrimination because of the way employers react to their gender identity and/or appearance.
42. The employment needs of young women are often overlooked. When sexism is compounded with homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, young women who are LGBTQ are at high risk for discrimination.
43. Insufficient job training and independent living opportunities exist in the City for LGBTQ youth, leading many LGBTQ youth to prostitution or drugs.
44. Police impose a \$300.00 fine for a first time prostitution pickup. For a young person who cannot find a job, the only recourse to paying the fine is additional sex work or going to jail.
45. LGBTQ youth are sometimes housed in substandard hotel or motel rooms that have not been inspected by the City's code enforcement mechanisms (the Department of Public Health and the Bureau of Building Inspections). This poses health and safety violations of the rights of LGBTQ youth.
46. The Department of Human Services operates a specialized teen unit that works with homeless youth, including LGBTQ youth, and the Homeless Youth Network. Other collaborations exist between Larkin Street Youth Services and the Department of Public Health/ Special Programs for Youth and the School District. These programs still cannot meet the needs of this growing population of homeless youth.

47. Many LGBTQQ youth use non- LGBTQQ specific housing and shelter programs. These spaces are not safe for LGBTQQ youth without LGBTQQ information integrated into the images, materials, and curriculum of all programs, regardless of whether the program is specifically designed for LGBTQQ youth.
48. Housing and shelter for young adults (18-25) are important since many LGBTQQ youth ages 18-25 may not feel comfortable going to adult shelters, and they are no longer eligible to receive services from Department of Social Services as youth.
49. There are currently no shelters designated specifically for LGBTQQ youth aged 18-25 who are homeless in San Francisco. There is only one privately owned group home, established in 1995, that serves LGBTQQ youth aged 13-18. This group home can only accommodate 6 youth.
50. The housing and shelter needs of LGBTQQ youth are linked to other needs, such as outreach, nutrition, shelter (emergency, transition, stable independent), job training/placement, continuing education/GED preparation, substance abuse treatment, suicide prevention, HIV prevention, and access to health clinics.
51. There are insufficient numbers of LGBTQQ foster homes available for homeless LGBTQQ adolescents. There is also a need non-LGBTQQ foster families that are safe and supportive for LGBTQQ youth.

Health and Mental Health

52. An erroneous message often sent to LGBTQQ youth is that there is something wrong with them that needs to be fixed or cured. The social problems that need to be dealt with are transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, and heterosexism, not the sexual orientation or gender identity of the young person.
53. LGBTQQ youth in stressful living situations can benefit from having a counselor or therapist they can trust. A good counselor enables a young person to defend himself or herself against abuse that stems from present conditions and past abuse. Present conditions may include poor housing, poverty, racism, ageism, transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia. Past abuse includes damage to the young person's self image and esteem from growing up LGBTQQ as well as the often-serious and unresolved conflicts they have with their families.
54. LGBTQQ youth who are isolated and alienated are denied opportunities to socialize with one another and other youth in supportive and empowering ways. LGBTQQ youth who are given the opportunity to interact with one another through support groups, rap groups, and other community involvement programs have a stronger sense of well being and improved mental health.
55. LGBTQQ youth are up to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth. Up to 30% of completed youth suicides annually are committed by LGBTQQ youth.

56. In California, AIDS is the #1 cause of death among young men aged 15-24, with disparate impact on gay and bisexual males. There are no statistics available on the effects of HIV/AIDS on transgender youth.
57. The needs of transgender youth at risk for HIV are often overlooked by funders and service providers in their allocation of resources.
58. Gay and bisexual men have thus far been the primary prevention target audience in the City's funded HIV prevention outreach to LGBTQQ youth. HIV and AIDS also affects women, including lesbians and bisexual women, and transgender people.
59. The needs of young women at risk for HIV are often overlooked by funders and service providers in their allocation of resources.
60. Many transgender youth find it difficult to find health care providers who are sensitive to their needs. Often, these transgender youth will forego routine checkups because of the lack of sensitive health care providers.
61. Many young women and youth of color find it difficult to find health care providers who are sensitive to their needs. Often, these young women will forego routine checkups because of the lack of sensitive health care providers.
62. Current barriers that LGBTQQ youth face when they try to access counseling and health care are prohibitive costs, insensitive providers, inadequate/ insufficient facilities and services, and the stigmas attached to being LGBTQQ.
63. Since homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual as a pathology, mental health professionals have turned to Gender Identity Disorder to pathologize and, in some cases, institutionalize LGBTQQ youth. This is exacerbated by the ease with which parents and legal guardians can voluntarily commit their children to mental institutions and abusive outpatient treatments.
64. The vast majority of self-identified transgendered and transsexual youth have no access to supportive counseling or to safe, medically supervised hormone therapy and other transition-related medical services. This is due to the absence of any public health services for transsexual youth, lack of knowledge and/or transphobic attitudes on the part of many health care providers, and lack of support from parents or legal guardians. For some transgendered and transsexual youth, access to hormone therapy is literally life-saving. When these youth are denied access to safe, medically supervised hormone therapy and other medical services, they may be driven to suicide or other self-destructive behaviors, including resort to unregulated street hormones.
65. LGBTQQ youth need to have adult role models that convey positive messages about LGBTQQ people. Adults who are role models or mentors for LGBTQQ youth should not have to encounter legal problems that arise out of erroneous stereotypes about homosexu-

ality and pedophilia.

66. The use of alcohol, tobacco, and other legal and illegal drugs is a reality that many LGBTQQ youth face. Often, LGBTQQ youth are not receiving the education and support needed to cope with issues of prevention, dependency, abuse, and addiction.
67. Substance abuse and residential programs in the city do not adequately meet the needs of LGBTQQ youth.

Youth Services

68. LGBTQQ youth have unique needs in addition to many of the same needs of all other youth. These overwhelming and diverse needs cannot be met with just a handful of agencies.
69. LGBTQQ youth live or are homeless in every neighborhood in San Francisco, not just the Castro or the Tenderloin. LGBTQQ youth also access services that are not LGBTQQ-specific. Therefore, youth service agencies and programs that are located outside the Castro and the Tenderloin, or that are not specifically designated for LGBTQQ youth still need to address the needs of LGBTQQ youth.
70. Many LGBTQQ youth who are under 18 years old have not come out about their sexual orientation or gender identity for a host of reasons. In order to provide a safe and affirming environment for these young people, agencies and programs must address the needs and promote the well being of young people of all sexualities and gender identities.
71. Transgender youth experience significant employment discrimination when they apply and interview for jobs due to their gender identity and/or appearance. If they are able to find a job, many transgender youth continue to be harassed and treated with contempt by employers, supervisors, and coworkers.
72. In addition to homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexism, and racism, some LGBTQQ youth also face economic, language, accessibility for disabled persons, and family barriers when trying to access youth service programs.
73. San Francisco has youth service agencies and programs that provide LGBTQQ youth much needed support and services. LGBTQQ youth need more places to stay, counseling, support, recreation, and opportunities to meet and relate with one another.
74. LGBTQQ youth have been resourceful in getting to service providers, but transportation costs and isolation in particular neighborhoods create gaps in the actual provision of services to some youth.
75. Services for young adults (18-25) are important since many LGBTQQ youth aged 18-25 may not feel comfortable going to adult service agencies and are also excluded from youth programs.

76. Current programs for LGBTQQ youth of color that are collaborative, peer-run, and multi-gender are models for further youth programming.
77. The Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families currently funds five agencies and two collaboratives. But LGBTQQ youth have diverse needs that cannot be met with just a handful of agencies or programs.
78. The Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families did not have statistics regarding whether LGBTQQ-specific allocations are proportional to the population of LGBTQQ youth in San Francisco.
79. When society and family have not been accepting, some LGBTQQ youth have found support, love, and opportunities to grow through programs which provide them safe and supportive opportunities to meet with one another.
80. LGBTQQ youth need safe spaces for recreation and social activity throughout the city. The mission of the Department of Recreation and Parks is to provide sports, art, games, and safe spaces to hang out in the afternoon, evenings, and weekends. Recreation and Parks has designated the Eureka Valley Community Center as the "lesbian and gay" safe space in San Francisco.
81. Recreation and Parks currently funds one 0.5 FTE position for "lesbian and gay" programming. There is no mandatory LGBTQQ sensitivity training for Recreation and Parks staff and volunteers. There is no summer camp program for LGBTQQ-identified youth.
82. Recreation and Parks has had a policy against using the word "queer," even if LGBTQQ youth decide to use it in an affirming sense.
83. Issues of youth employment are linked to issues of education, low-income economic status, immigration, homelessness, health and mental health, food, and transportation.
84. The Beacons Center in Visitacion Valley is funded to provide a host of afterschool enrichment programs and recreation. Beacons also operates a family resource center, conducts outreach in 5 languages, and collaborates with the Police Department, San Francisco State University, City College, the YMCA, the Red Cross, and Recreation and Parks to provide substance abuse counseling, in-home tutors, ESL classes, homelessness prevention, and cultural activities.
85. There are currently no active or proactive programs for LGBTQQ youth at the Beacons Center in Visitacion Valley. The Beacons Center only treats "lesbian and gay" youth through the health and mental health components of its Healthy Start program.
86. YMCA of San Francisco does not operate a program for LGBTQQ youth in San Francisco. YMCA-SF does operate a Gay and Lesbian Teen Intervention program that offers counseling, schools outreach, and youth services outreach to youth in San Mateo County.

87. Mentoring and intergenerational programs for LGBTQ youth can promote support and confidence. Out, LGBTQ adults can be positive role models that play a critical role in the lives of LGBTQ youth.
88. The LGBTQ communities currently provide insufficient services for LGBTQ youth.

Juvenile Justice

89. Statistics indicate that a low number of youth identify themselves as LGBTQ in the juvenile justice system and in Juvenile Hall. This is because the Juvenile Justice system and Juvenile Hall are not safe places for LGBTQ youth to come out. Out LGBTQ youth often experience harassment from other youth and staff.
90. The San Francisco Police Department has a youth program that involves recreation, cultural activity, mentoring programs, and tutorial programs for youth throughout the City. In 1995, the program served 27,000 youth in San Francisco. Information is unavailable regarding the number of LGBTQ youth involved in the program. Many young people have negative perceptions of the police stemming from interactions where officers demonstrate ageism, racism, and discrimination based on language ability.
91. The Police Department recently named an officer to be the Department's gay and lesbian community liaison.
92. Many of the LGBTQ youth who enter the juvenile justice system do so by committing crimes of need, such as stealing or prostitution for survival.
93. Many youth who enter the juvenile justice system for hate-related crimes have committed offenses against LGBTQ people.
94. LGBTQ youth who have gone through Juvenile Hall report discriminatory treatment by staff and homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia from other youth in the system. Staff concedes that sometimes special arrangements, for example with separate showering, are made to protect the youth from danger. Protective policy decisions can nonetheless have stigmatizing effects that need to be weighed.
95. Juvenile Hall's general policy is to mainstream LGBTQ youth with other youth, unless an issue arises which requires special assignment to a small, separate unit for the best interests of the young person.
96. Incoming Juvenile Hall youth are given a packet which includes information on LGBTQ staff people who are "out" and accessible in the system, as well as information about LGBTQ programs outside the system that they can go to when they leave.
97. LGBTQ youth who are also immigrants or with limited or no English ability face multiple barriers to services.

Recommendations

In response to the issues and needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth found upon consideration of verbal and written testimony of the September 26, 1996 public hearing the Human Rights Commission, hereby recommends:

Youth and Schools

1. Mandate that a plan be constructed to provide sensitivity trainings for all elementary, middle, and high school faculty, staff, and administrators in the San Francisco Unified School District.
2. Work with private schools in order to protect the rights of enrolled LGBTQQ student.
3. Conduct on-going, on-site training of administrators and faculty, especially LGBTQQ-sensitive designated adults, on the active and proactive management of LGBTQQ issues, free of transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia.
4. Include, as applicable, into administrator and teacher annual performance reviews the following:
 - a. Appropriate and consistent enforcement of the District's anti-slur policy;
 - b. Effective implementation of LGBTQQ-inclusive curriculum;
 - c. Implementation of all district policies that protect against discrimination on the basis of gender identity and or sexual orientation for students, faculty, staff, and administrators; and
 - d. Fulfillment of obligation to make the classroom and school building a safe place for LGBTQQ youth to learn.
5. Increase the accountability and responsibility of each school to insure that LGBTQQ youth and children of LGBTQQ families are safe to learn in that school by including their concerns in every Safe School plan.
6. Provide a safe environment so that students, staff, teachers, and administrators can come out without fear of reprisal or harassment.
7. Require total enforcement of the District anti-slur policy, including the addition of gender identity and sexual orientation as a category on incident report forms.
8. Add gender identity as a protected category in all non-discrimination policies and procedures applying to all students in the District.
9. Designate incidents of harassment, assaults, and slurs based on gender identity and sexual orientation as sexual harassment and bias crimes.
10. Make it easy for students to fill out slur violation forms and mandate a census by every District school to compile information on policy violations that will be sent to the Youth

Commission. Teachers should be held accountable for not enforcing the slur policy in their classrooms.

11. Clarify and broadly disseminate grievance procedures for handling sexual harassment and bias crimes based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Procedures should be clear, in youth-friendly language, translated into different languages, and posted around every school site. The procedure must clearly designate the appropriate persons for students to call for a response to their complaint or grievance.
12. Implement a system for tracking hate-related verbal and physical violence against LGBTQ students in the schools, including an annual summary of incidents of slurs, harassment, and assaults made upon the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
13. Distribute information for victims and perpetrators to students, teachers, and families that makes clear the consequences of hate-related verbal and physical violence against LGBTQ youth.
14. Continue efforts to educate and counsel perpetrators of hate crimes and violators of the anti-slur policy; include greater outreach by on-site teachers and administrators, and usage of materials combating homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in all of its manifestations in the schools.
15. Strengthen and improve information and dissemination of school grievance procedures for LGBTQ students who have suffered harassment, discrimination, and/or slurs based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
16. Increase funding to address LGBTQ youth needs to ensure the District:
 - a. Establishes a minimum level of staffing for permanent and ongoing support services for LGBTQ youth, regardless of grant funding;
 - b. Proactively makes available and displays books, posters and visuals for LGBTQ youth, including LGBTQ youth of color, and books in different languages addressing LGBTQ issues;
 - c. Expands the services of the Office of Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth to meet the diverse and comprehensive needs of all LGBTQ students;
 - d. Prioritizes and allocates a LGBTQ resource person for elementary schools in the District;
 - e. Ensures that peer counselor programs reflect the diversity of LGBTQ students, including bisexual and transgender representation; and
 - f. Expands its capacity to translate materials for LGBTQ youth into other languages.
17. Continue supporting programs for students who have come out or are trying to come out by supporting LGBTQ student groups and/or LGBT/Straight alliances on each campus; develop opportunities for LGBTQ youth to meet other LGBTQ youth in safe and affirming environments.

18. Develop effective methods for students, parents, counselors, teachers, and administrators to address LGBTQQ youth issues and concerns, both informally and through the school administration.
19. Ensure that information regarding access to the designated LGBTQQ- “sensitive” teacher is distributed and posted for students in a safe way so that students can seek and receive information without fear of harassment. These designated “sensitive” teachers should be safe for transgender, bisexual, and questioning students, not just lesbian and gay students.

Information should also be posted to safely notify students of off-site resources for support and counseling (such as Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth). Students may prefer this alternative if there is actual or perceived stigma attached to talking to the designated “sensitive” teacher within the school.
20. Continue to offer training and support to LGBTQQ teachers, administrators, and counselors, and other staff who want to be additional resources to LGBTQQ students.
21. Mandate that LGBTQQ-positive information be displayed at every campus in such a way that won't be turned down.
22. Expand and improve curriculum to address the experiences of LGBTQQ youth. Teachers should present positive images of LGBTQQ people in the classroom and discuss alternative family configurations.
23. Encourage the development of curriculum, programs, and presentations regarding bisexual and transgender lives and issues.
24. Integrate LGBTQQ issues across disciplines including, but not limited to, social studies, language arts, science, and health.
25. Ensure that all school-related activities, such as social events, social organizations, school dances, are free of heterosexism, transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia.
26. Take advantage of National Coming Out Day and Pride Week to celebrate the accomplishments of LGBTQQ people, honor LGBTQQ history, and recommit to protecting and respecting the rights and lives of LGBTQQ people living today.
27. Designate at least one professional development day per year for dealing with LGBTQQ curriculum and issues.
28. Encourage working with the Parents Teachers Association to address LGBTQQ issues. For example, develop workshops which would enable the PTA to designate at least one meeting per year to address LGBTQQ issues, such as information and discussion of safety in the schools, and the anti-slur, nondiscrimination, and harassment policies and procedures.

29. Encourage the PTA to develop policies that support LGBTQQ students and families and implement sensitivity trainings for officers.
30. Expand outreach to the parent and family community, including parents and siblings of LGBTQQ students, LGBTQQ parents of students, and other parents.
31. Disseminate educational information to parents of students in the District regarding issues of LGBTQQ youth. This could either be a part of the newsletter sent to parents or via direct mail.
32. Continue, and expand where necessary, to provide academic, vocational, and counseling assistance to at-risk LGBTQQ students.
33. Continue to promote student health by addressing suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, and safer sex education.
34. Expand collaborations with programs that provide LGBTQQ speakers to make presentations regarding LGBTQQ issues at District schools. The District can provide a list of all classrooms to speakers bureau programs so they may pro-actively contact classroom teachers to schedule District-approved presentations.

Establish a goal to get LGBTQQ speakers into every high school and middle school in the school district, such that every student has an opportunity to attend. Once there is a resource person for LGBTQQ issues at the elementary levels, age-appropriate LGBTQQ speakers should make presentations in District elementary schools.

35. Support school functions, such as family picnics and get-togethers, that celebrate and support LGBTQQ students and families.

Family, Housing, and Shelter

36. Implement sensitivity trainings of LGBTQQ issues for all housing and shelter personnel receiving funds from the City. Expand City funding to hire and train LGBTQQ youth who will be central to the development and implementation of these trainings. Recruit a committee, also including LGBTQQ youth, that will oversee the development of these trainings.

Trainings should include, but not be limited to: issues of homophobia and biphobia (the fear or hatred of LGBTQQ people, and the manifestations of this fear and hatred), heterosexism (the belief that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality, and the manifestations of this belief), and transphobia (the fear and hatred of people who are transgender).

37. Implement protocols and procedures that ensure all youth housing and shelter programs will be safe and affirming environments for staff and youth who are LGBTQQ.

These protocols and procedures should include, but not be limited to:

- a. A statement of non-discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes;
- b. Assurances of safety for LGBTQQ individuals;
- c. A department plan to deal with staff and youth that are beginning to realize that they are LGBTQQ; and
- d. A checklist of how to actively and proactively integrate LGBTQQ issues into housing and shelter program materials. For example, LGBTQQ-sensitive questions on intake forms and LGBTQQ posters and periodicals in waiting rooms.

38. Increase City programs to meet the housing needs (including emergency, shelter, and transitional housing programs) of LGBTQQ youth. Create and adapt programs that are sensitive and address the specific housing needs of LGBTQQ youth aged 18-21, who currently must access adult services.
39. Encourage and strengthen programs that allow LGBTQQ Youth to be placed in foster care, housed, or adopted by LGBTQQ or other LGBTQQ-sensitive adults.
40. Develop housing programs and services that address the needs of women, particularly lesbian, bisexual, transgender women, and women of color.
41. Ensure that all youth housing and shelter programs will be a safe environment for transgender youth. In addition to statements of non-discrimination based on gender identity, there should be distinct rooms to house transgender youth, assurances of safety for individuals that are transgender and/or gender questioning, and a plan to deal with staff and youth that are beginning to realize they are transgender and/or gender questioning.
42. Develop City programs that provide emergency housing services to youth. Services should include emergency housing money for youth, housing referrals, housing assistance programs, and housing services and money for youth seeking emancipation.
43. Convene a task force to determine the need and feasibility of group homes in the City for LGBTQQ youth. Youth must be an integral part of this task force which ultimately can help develop city-funded group homes and housing programs for LGBTQQ youth. The task force would also be comprised of community members, non-profit agencies, and housing programs.
44. Mandate the Department of Human Services to ensure that group homes are sensitive to the needs of LGBTQQ youth.
45. Develop City-funded services that focus on dynamics within the family to address the needs of homeless LGBTQQ youth.
46. Provide sensitivity trainings on the issues of LGBTQQ youth to organizations that provide

family dispute resolution services.

47. Prohibit rental discrimination against minors who have been legally emancipated.
48. Recognize the special needs of homeless LGBTQQ youth through routine inspection of housing (both permanent and temporary) where homeless youth are placed; creating a special division for homeless LGBTQQ youth issues within the health department; and increasing the focus on hotels where homeless youth may be placed.
49. Support the efforts of the Department of Human Services to recruit LGBTQQ and LGBTQQ-sensitive foster and adoptive homes for adolescents.
50. Convene a task force to determine the need and feasibility of establishing a service to address the unique needs of LGBTQQ adolescents, including foster care placement.
51. Support the establishment of a network of support groups for LGBTQQ youth, including foster placements.
52. Support collaborations with other Bay Area counties regarding LGBTQQ youth issues so that similar programs and supportive services are implemented and available in all Bay Area counties.
53. Encourage and support collaborations between Department of Human Services' Specialized Teen Unit, the Homeless Youth Network, and other agencies providing services to LGBTQQ youth and/or homeless youth.
54. Investigate and ensure that City funding for LGBTQQ youth that are homeless is commensurate to the percentage need of LGBTQQ youth to the general youth population.
55. Recognize that fining youth for prostitution may simply drive the young person to do more sex work to pay the fine. Investigate alternative methods of dealing with young prostitutes, including community service, job training, and placement.
56. Recognize that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia can be forms of emotional abuse inflicted on children and youth. This recognition can be used by Child Protective Services in working with a family where a LGBTQQ child is abused by a homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic parent.
57. Encourage agencies to respect and protect the privacy of LGBTQQ youth. LGBTQQ youth should have physical privacy as well as the right to decide not to discuss their sexuality and/or gender identity.
58. Ensure that the needs of LGBTQQ youth of color and youth with children of their own are addressed by housing and shelter programs.

59. Support and encourage the positive aspects of religion and spirituality in affirmation and respecting of human lives. Discourage the use of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism by religious and spiritual service providers that will have a negative effect on LGBTQQ youth and families.

Health and Mental Health

60. Implement sensitivity trainings of LGBTQQ issues for all City-funded health care providers, including hospitals, clinics, therapists and schools. Expand City funding to hire and train LGBTQQ youth who will be central to the development and implementation of these trainings. Recruit a committee, also including LGBTQQ youth, that will oversee the development of these trainings.

Trainings should include, but not be limited to: issues of homophobia and biphobia (the fear or hatred of LGBTQQ people, and the manifestations of this fear and hatred), heterosexism (the belief that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality, and the manifestations of this belief), and transphobia (the fear and hatred of people who are transgender).

61. Implement protocols and procedures that ensure that all health/mental health programs for youth will be safe and affirming environments for staff and youth who are LGBTQQ.

These protocols and procedures should include, but not be limited to:

- Statements of nondiscrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes;
- Assurances of safety for LGBTQQ individuals;
- A plan to deal with staff and youth beginning to realize they are LGBTQQ;
- A checklist of how to actively and proactively integrate LGBTQQ issues into program materials. For example: LGBTQQ-sensitive questions on intake forms and LGBTQQ posters and periodicals in waiting areas.

62. Increase the accessibility of counseling, medication, and medical care for LGBTQQ youth.
63. Broadly advertise programs that are currently available. Place brochures and posters targeting the health/mental health needs of LGBTQQ youth in waiting rooms, schools, and community boards in all youth service provider offices and community areas.
64. Support efforts to focus on and address the specific health/mental health needs of transgender youth, LGBTQQ youth of color, and lesbians and bisexual young women.
65. Increase funding for programs that serve and support HIV-positive youth.
66. Expand HIV prevention efforts to reach all LGBTQQ youth, not just gay men. Support prevention efforts that also provide services to LGBTQQ youth who are HIV negative.

67. Sex education should be open and respectful regarding sexual interactions among LGBTQQ persons.
68. Mandate education about the health and mental health issues of transgendered and transsexual youth for all health and mental health care providers receiving City funds. This should include education about the misuse of Gender Identity Disorder and other diagnoses to force unwanted and damaging psychiatric treatment on LGBTQQ youth, as well as education about the specific health care needs of self-identified transgendered and transsexual youth, including access to safe, medically supervised hormone therapy. Mental health and health care providers should limit the diagnosis of GID to self-identified transgendered and transsexual adults and transgendered and transsexual youth who are unable to receive hormone therapy and/or sex-reassignment surgeries without the diagnosis.
69. Fund public health services for transgendered and transsexual youth, including access to safe, medically supervised hormone therapy for self-identified transgendered and transsexual youth. Spend no City funds, directly or indirectly, on mental health treatments or programs which use GID or any other diagnoses to administer involuntary or unwanted counseling, psychiatric medication, behavior modification, or other mental health treatments designed to change or manipulate a youth's actual or perceived homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexualism, or transgenderism.
70. Address the high incidence of attempted and completed suicides among LGBTQQ youth and youth affected by HIV. Develop support and suicide prevention programs specifically addressing the emotional risk of these youth. Strengthen suicide prevention programs to address the needs of at-risk LGBTQQ youth.
71. Convene a task force to assess the need and feasibility of a recovery program for LGBTQQ youth, including a sub-program targeting HIV-positive 18-25 year olds. The program would include but not be limited to a recovery program, vocational and educational rehabilitation, and assisted living and housing. The task force steering committee should be staffed by queer youth and should work with existing programs, such as Walden House, Larkin Street Youth Center, and Bay Positives.
72. Support and create peer programs that encourage the development of role models and community for LGBTQQ youth.
73. Encourage the Department of Public Health to proactively implement a media campaign to raise the visibility of healthy LGBTQQ youth, especially HIV-positive youth, youth of color, young women, and transgender youth.
74. Encourage all religious institutions to examine their effect on LGBTQQ youth, especially negative effects, silence, or apathy towards LGBTQQ youth.
75. Encourage all religious institutions to see LGBTQQ youth as having many aspects of their lives related to their sexual orientation or gender identities, and to cease concentrating on

76. Encourage religious institutions to celebrate LGBTQQ lives, and to publish literature against discrimination and violence towards LGBTQQ youth.
77. Encourage prevention and treatment efforts that address drug, alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use and abuse
78. Ensure services for victims of rape and sexual abuse are safe and affirming places for survivors who are LGBTQQ.

Youth Services

79. Implement sensitivity trainings of LGBTQQ issues for all agency staff and youth clients of youth services programs funded by the City. Expand City funding to hire and train LGBTQQ youth who will be central to the development and implementation of these trainings. Recruit a committee, also including LGBTQQ youth, that will oversee the development of these trainings.

Trainings should include, but not be limited to: issues of homophobia and biphobia (the fear or hatred of LGBTQQ people, and the manifestations of this fear and hatred), heterosexism (the belief that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality, and the manifestations of this belief), and transphobia (the fear and hatred of people who are transgender).

80. Create personnel and agency policies and procedures that develop a Plan of Action to ensure that all youth service agencies (especially non-LGBTQQ-identified) will be safe and affirming places for LGBTQQ staff and youth.

The Plan should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Statements of non-discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes;
 - b. Assurances of safety for LGBTQQ individuals;
 - c. An agency plan to deal with staff and youth that are beginning to realize that they are LGBTQQ; and
 - d. A checklist of how to include LGBTQQ issues and visibility to agency materials. For example, LGBTQQ-sensitive questions on intake forms and LGBTQQ posters and periodicals in waiting rooms.
81. Develop a grievance procedure for LGBTQQ youth to be able to complain against any City agency that is intolerant or condoned action that led to violence. The Human Rights Commission can be identified as the agency to contact to make complaints or to get information. Information gathered by the Commission can be used as a record for contract compliance. Proof of non-discrimination should be a condition of funding.
 82. Require that City-funded youth services, housing, juvenile justice, and relevant programs

demonstrate positive attitudes and proactive services for LGBTQQ youth. This demonstration should be part of any assessment for new or continued funding.

83. Require that every youth agency's need assessment include the issues and needs of LGBTQQ Youth. Every department should complete an audit of LGBTQQ youth needs.
84. Investigate and ensure that City funding (including Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families) for LGBTQQ youth agencies and programs is at least commensurate with the percentage of LGBTQQ youth to the general youth population, while recognizing that LGBTQQ youth may have higher needs than some non-LGBTQQ youth populations.
85. Develop a needs assessment for LGBTQQ youth through MOCYF that includes, but is not limited to, the following areas: mental health/health services, accessibility of services, academic needs, job training programs, and recreation/social services.
86. Establish a committee to develop and conduct a city-wide LGBTQQ youth service plan based on the results of the needs assessment. Members of this committee should include youth, community based organizations, City agencies, City officials, and community members.
87. Evaluate the implementation and quality of services and policies for LGBTQQ youth through regular assessments of appropriate and relevant agencies (which may include ones that are adult or non-LGBTQQ specific) receiving City funding.
88. Ensure youth and services providers access to resources, including the City-funded Resource Guide, and other needed materials.
89. Require all Department of Recreation and Parks sites to become safe spaces for LGBTQQ youth throughout the city, not just at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center. Mandate LGBTQQ sensitivity trainings for all Parks and Recreation staff. Increase Parks and Recreation staffing to at least a 1.0 FTE administrative level LGBTQQ resource person. Ensure that summer camp programs are safe spaces for LGBTQQ youth, designating one such camp for LGBTQQ-identified youth.
90. Change the "lesbian and gay" programs and site names of Recreation and Parks and the YMCA to include "bisexual" and "transgender."
91. Implement protocols and procedures that ensure that all Beacons Centers are safe spaces for LGBTQQ youth and that these centers proactively address the needs of LGBTQQ youth. Expand the collaborative efforts of the Beacons Centers to include agencies that serve LGBTQQ youth.
92. LGBTQQ youth programs should not arise solely out of health or mental health interventions.
93. Integrate LGBTQQ services, resources, and issues into the training and referrals for the

City's proposed Youthline. Adult and youth staff of the Youthline should include openly LGBTQQ people.

94. Investigate and prohibit employment, housing, and public accomodation discrimination targeted specifically at transgender youth due to their gender identity and/or appearance.
95. Support youth service programs which recognize and try to overcome, economic, language, and family barriers that LGBTQQ youth may face.
96. Support the continued and additional funding of programs for LGBTQQ youth of color that are collaborative, peer-run, and multigender.
97. Support initiatives to create safe spaces for LGBTQQ youth throughout the city to meet and relate with one another.
98. Promote programs that connect youth with their history, culture, and community through positive, structured relationships with LGBTQQ adults and elders. Recognize the critical role that adults play in the lives of LGBTQQ youth by supporting and funding mentoring and intergenerational programs.
99. Support programs that promote youth employment within the context of other social issues such as homelessness, health/mental health, food, and transportation.
100. Provide free transportation passes to youth to facilitate access to services throughout the city.
101. Change definition of sexual orientation in the Administrative Code to: actual or perceived homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality.
102. Encourage the LGBTQQ communities to create and expand programs, services, and spaces for LGBTQQ youth, including employment, education, and recreational programs.

Juvenile Justice

103. Implement sensitivity trainings of LGBTQQ issues for all Juvenile Justice personnel, including police officers of every rank, non-profit personnel, and Probation Officers dealing with youth. Expand City funding to hire and train LGBTQQ youth who will be central to the development and implementation of these trainings. Recruit a committee, also including LGBTQQ youth, that will oversee the development of these trainings.

Trainings should include, but not be limited to: issues of homophobia and biphobia (the fear or hatred of LGBTQQ people, and the manifestations of this fear and hatred), heterosexism (the belief that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality, and the manifestations of this belief), and transphobia (the fear and hatred of people who are transgender).

104. Implement protocols and procedures that ensure that the Juvenile Justice system will be a safe and affirming environment for staff and youth who are LGBTQQ.

These protocols and procedures should include, but not be limited to:

- a. A statement of non-discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes;
 - b. Assurances of safety for LGBTQQ individuals;
 - c. A department plan to deal with staff and youth that are beginning to realize that they are LGBTQQ;
 - d. A checklist of how to integrating LGBTQQ issues into department materials. For example, LGBTQQ-sensitive questions on intake forms and LGBTQQ posters and periodicals in waiting rooms;
 - e. Assign designated safe person for LGBTQQ youth going through the system.
105. Youth Guidance Center policies that treat LGBTQQ youth differently from other youth should be evaluated. YGC should maintain policies that serve valid safety purposes. Stigmatizing and isolating policies that serve no valid safety purpose should be eliminated.
106. Ensure safe and affirming environments for LGBTQQ youth placed out-of-home (e.g., group homes, residential programs, foster and adoptive homes). Develop a screening process for foster and adoptive parents to ensure they will be safe and affirming with LGBTQQ youth.
107. Establish a committee to develop and conduct a needs assessment of LGBTQQ youth within the Juvenile Justice System. Members of this committee should include youth, community based organizations, the Youth Guidance Center, the Probation Department, City officials, community members, and representatives of the Youth Commission, Delinquency Prevention Commission, and Juvenile Justice Commission. The assessment should include, but not be limited to, the following areas: the difficulties of LGBTQQ Youth in the juvenile system, the needs of LGBTQQ Youth, existing and needed mental/health services, and accessibility of services.
108. Develop and implement ongoing education programs for youth inmates. These programs should address such areas as respecting diversity, developing tolerance, homophobia, biphobia, heterosexism, and transphobia.
109. Develop a city-funded counseling and education program for all individuals convicted of hate violence. All youth convicted of hate crimes, particularly those convicted of physical attacks on LGBTQQ individuals should be required to participate in this program as a prerequisite for release. Due to the low rate of conviction of hate crimes, counseling should also be a pre-condition of release for reduced sentencing or plea bargaining if the original charge is hate-related.
110. Ensure that LGBTQQ Youth escaping abusive and or non-accepting households are classified

within the juvenile justice system as abuse survivors. Currently, they are charged with the status offending crime of running away and labeled “juvenile delinquent.”

111. Implement protocols and procedures to ensure that the Youth Guidance Center will be a safe environment for transgender youth. These protocols and procedures should include statements of non-discrimination, assurances of safety for individuals that are transgender and/or gender questioning, a department plan to deal with staff and youth who are beginning to realize they are transgender and/or gender questioning, and assigning an adult who will be safe and affirming to LGBTQ youth.
112. Create mentoring/outreach/tutorial programs for LGBTQ youth designed for delinquency prevention. Allocate police officers, YGC personnel, or those with hands-on experience in the Juvenile Justice system that are “out” or sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ Youth to implement and staff the program.
113. Hold “know your rights” trainings to provide LGBTQ youth information about their individual rights in the Juvenile Justice system. Trainers should be law students, teachers, attorneys, or peers that have significant knowledge of and experience with the particular problems LGBTQ youth face in the Juvenile Justice system.
114. Develop a grievance procedure that enables LGBTQ youth to complain and know they have the right to complain, if they are the victims of LGBTQ-related mistreatment within the Juvenile Justice system. Complaints filed against an agency can be used as negative criteria for renewal of the contract or project.
115. Expand the name of the Police Department’s lesbian and gay community liaison to include “bisexual and transgender.”
116. Hire openly LGBTQ staff at the Youth Guidance Center.

Chapter 5 . . .

Implementation

Implementation

On December 12, 1996, the Human Rights Commission unanimously adopted its findings and recommendations based on the information gathered at this public hearing. On June 12, 1997, the Commission unanimously approved amendments and adopted the final 97 Findings and 116 Recommendations (see Chapter 4).

Arising out of this hearing and these findings and recommendations, both the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors have considered resolutions to implement recommendations to better meet the needs of LGBTQ Youth in San Francisco.

On October 22, 1996, the Board of Education adopted the resolution, "MEETING THE NEEDS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS" (See Appendix). The Board is currently reviewing the implementation plan for this resolution.

One of the purposes of this report is to assist in the continued implementation of the recommendations proposed. To this end, the Human Rights Commission, during the course of regularly scheduled meetings, will periodically review the status of the City's progress towards full implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Furthermore, Supervisor Tom Ammiano intends to introduce, with other members of the Board of Supervisors co-sponsoring, a resolution to create a task force, staffed by a consultant, to oversee the implementation process of the Human Rights Commission's recommendations.

Appendices

- A. Public Hearing Flyer
- B. News Release announcing Public Hearing
- C. Statements of LGBTQ Youth
- D. Fact Sheet on LGBTQ Youth
- E. Public Hearing Agenda
- F. San Francisco Bay Guardian Article
- G. San Francisco Frontiers Article
- H. Bay Area Reporter Article
- I. San Francisco Examiner Article
- J. San Francisco Chronicle Article
- K. Board of Education Resolution



QUEER YOUTH *SPEAK OUT!*

AT THE
SAN FRANCISCO
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

QUEER YOUTH PUBLIC HEARING

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO TELL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE
QUEER AND YOUNG IN SAN FRANCISCO

WHEN: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1996
4:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

WHERE: Board of Supervisors' Chambers
San Francisco City Hall
401 Van Ness Ave., Room 404

INFO: For Information Call Brian Cheu
(415) 252-2500
TDD (415) 252-2550



Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.
Mayor

Contract Compliance
Dispute Resolution/Fair Housing
Minority/Women/Local Business Enterprise
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & HIV Discrimination

Marivic S. Bamba
Executive Director

MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT: Brian Cheu, (415) 252-2512

Date: August 29, 1996

FIRST EVER PUBLIC HEARINGS ON LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER AND QUESTIONING YOUTH SLATED FOR CITY; YOUTH TESTIMONY ON DISCRIMINATION SOUGHT

A gay highschooler tormented by the backlash when he comes out to other students. A young transgender woman wondering if she can get necessary health services. A teenage lesbian worried about getting kicked out of her home. A 16-year-old bisexual youth who agonizes over AIDS.

Today these may be anonymous youth grappling with the difficulties of being young and "queer," but soon their stories and others like them will be heard for the first time in a public hearing. A "Public Hearing on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Youth" will be held this September 26 in San Francisco to shed light on the needs of and existing services for queer youth.

The hearing sponsored by the City's Human Rights Commission (HRC), is the first of its kind in San Francisco. It may also be one of the first times in the country that young gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (l/g/b/t/q/q) people have testified on their own behalf in such a public government-sponsored forum.

"We believe this is a tremendous opportunity to shine a light on a traditionally neglected problem: the discrimination faced by l/g/b/t/q/q youth in the schools and in the general community," said Martha Knutzen, HRC Chair. "The public hearing will examine present services for these youth and examine whether these services meet their needs. It will also help set goals to improve services in our City for these young people."

Testimony from l/g/b/t/q/q youth is now being sought. Those individuals up to the age of 25 who would like more information on testifying at the hearing should contact Brian Cheu, Human Rights Commission staffer, at (415) 252-2512. The Youth Task Force of the HRC's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee is the main organizer of the hearing.

WHAT: Public Hearing on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth, to focus on school system, juvenile justice, family, housing, services, health and discrimination.

WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 26, 1996, 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Board of Supervisors' chambers, 401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 404.

CONTACT: Brian Cheu, Human Rights Commission, (415) 252-2512

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Statements of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth

"This hearing will send a message to Sacramento and Washington D.C. that harassment of queer students in school will not be tolerated and that they must introduce legislation outlawing such harassment." - **Jesse Costello-Good**

"I feel that my needs as a young queer woman are not met by the school system, public or private. We as queer youth are ignored by our educators and harassed by our peers. We don't deserve to be treated as second class citizens. I am here because I want to tell people that something has to be done about the lack of education and information about queer people in schools. We shouldn't have to tolerate bigotry." - **Gina De Vries**

"Coming from a third world country, I was already considered by many to be second class. Being gay put me as the president of second class. It adds up: I'm tired, exhausted, of now being fourth class." - **David Lopez**

"I'm focusing on making low income housing available for queer people under the age of 23. This is really important especially because there is nothing available for young queer people in the city and housing is a big issue that we have to deal with that has yet to be noticed." - **Chandra Andrews**

"This hearing is the first of its kind to allow an invisible minority to make their voices heard in society. Fear of being gay bashed, coming out, and the fear of not being accepted by friends and family are issues all too common for an average young gay person to deal with. At this hearing, not only will we hear these needs and concerns but we will feel the strength and courage that a young person cultivates in order to survive in today's world." - **Kent Khounsombath**

"Our needs as a group have long been underserved, and if we want a change for the better, who better to start the change than ourselves?" - **Wilson Fang**

"We are discriminated against in the juvenile justice system, especially in juvenile hall. When they find out that you are gay or lesbian, you can get beat up. I hope to try and change this through this hearing" - **Adriana San Pedro**





FACT SHEET

For the Human Rights Commission Public Hearing

on

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer and Questioning Youth

The five topic areas which will be covered during the public hearing are:

- *Schools*
- *Family, Housing, Shelter*
- *Health*
- *Youth Services*
- *Juvenile Justice*

The Human Rights Commission will be approving Findings and Recommendations in these five areas at their October 24, 1996 meeting. People are encouraged to attend this meeting to provide the Commission with their input. For more information, contact Commission staff person Brian Cheu at (415) 252-2512.

Schools

Many LGBTQ youth do not feel safe or supported at school.

- More than a third of all LGBTQ youth are either verbally or physically assaulted by their peers because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.¹
- 45% of gay males and 20% of lesbians experience verbal or physical assault in high school.²
- 28% of youth who experience verbal or physical assault based on their sexual orientation are forced to drop out of high school because of the harassment they experience.³
- When students seek counseling from their schools, educators often feel uncomfortable speaking to students about homosexuality.⁴



Family, Housing, Shelter

Abuse, neglect and homelessness are problems commonly faced by LGBTQ youth.

- 26% of LGBTQ youth are forced out of their homes because of conflicts with their families over their sexual orientation or gender identity.⁵
- Half of all LGBTQ youth interviewed reported that their parents rejected them due to their sexual orientation.⁶
- Physical and verbal abuse by parents is not an unusual response to a youth's sexual orientation or gender identity.⁷
- Up to half of the gay and bisexual males forced out of their homes engage in prostitution to support themselves, greatly increasing their risk for HIV infection.⁸

Health

Despite the mental and physical health risks faced by LGBTQ youth, available services are inadequate and many service providers aren't trained to address the health needs of LGBTQ youth.

- LGBTQ youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth. Up to 30% of the completed young suicides are committed by LGBTQ youth each year.⁹
- In a study of 137 gay and bisexual young men, 29% had attempted suicide, almost half of whom reported multiple attempts.¹⁰
- Many physicians do not discuss sexual orientation or gender identity with their adolescent patients. Some feel that it is outside their realm; others fear that discussing it may upset teenage patients or their parents. Many feel too uninformed or uncomfortable to be helpful.¹¹
- Even though homosexuality is no longer classified as a mental illness in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, mental health professionals use a different diagnosis, Gender Identity Disorder, to pathologize and institutionalize LGBTQ youth.¹²
- By using Gender Identity Disorder as a diagnosis of LGBTQ youth, parents have been able to voluntarily commit to institutions their children who express their gender identity in a non-traditional way or who express their lesbian, gay or bisexual orientation.¹³

Juvenile Justice

LGBTQ youth often become part of the juvenile justice system because of the stigmatization of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The system does not always understand how to address the root causes of their delinquency.

- Instead of being viewed as victims of parental abuse and neglect, LGBTQ youth who are forced out of their homes by their parents' homophobia or ordered to leave by their parents are often mischaracterized by the juvenile justice system as "runaways," which is a status offense.
- Delinquent LGBTQ youth are often punished by the juvenile justice system for the status of their identity rather than for the crime for which they were sentenced.
- LGBTQ youth retained in the juvenile justice system are subject to verbal and physical abuse because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

¹ Mary B.W. Tabor, "For Gay High-School Seniors: Nightmare is Almost Over," *N. Y. Times*, June 14, 1992, at A1.

² National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization," New York, 1984; and G. Remafedi, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," 79 *Pediatrics* 326-30 (1987).

³ *Id.*

⁴ G. Remafedi, "Impact of Training on School Professionals' Knowledge, Beliefs, and Behaviors Regarding HIV/AIDS and Adolescent Homosexuality," 63 *J. Sch. Health* 153 (1993).

⁵ National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Anti-Gay Victimization," New York, 1984; and G. Remafedi, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," 79 *Pediatrics* 326-30 (1987).

⁶ Toni Locy, "Weld Creates Panel on Gay Youth Issues," *Boston Globe*, Feb. 11, 1992, at 18. See also G. Remafedi, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," 79 *Pediatrics* 326-30 (1987).

⁷ Deborah Zera, "Coming of Age in a Heterosexist World: The Development of Gay and Lesbian Adolescents," 27 *Adolescence* 849, 851 (1992).

⁸ R.C. Savin-Williams, "Theoretical Perspectives Accounting for Adolescent Homosexuality," 9(2) *J. Adol. Health-Care* 95-104, March 1988.

⁹ Paul Gibson, LCSW, "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide," *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989.

¹⁰ G. Remafedi, J.A. Farrow, R.W. Delsher, "Risk Factors for Attempted Suicide in Gay and Bisexual Youth," *Pediatrics*, 87(6), June 1991.

- 80% of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth report severe isolation problems, including social isolation (having no one to talk to), emotional isolation (feeling distanced from family and peers), and cognitive isolation (lack of access to good information about sexual orientation).¹⁴
- In a San Francisco study, almost half of the young men aged 17-18 reported having participated in unprotected anal intercourse, compared to approximately 25% of the 20-22 year olds and 30% of the 23-25 year olds.¹⁵
- Over 14% of young men aged 17-22 have tested HIV positive, as have 10.4% of men aged 23-25.¹⁶
- 60% of young adult cases of AIDS are among men who have had sex with men. Because HIV has an average incubation period of 10.5 years before the onset of AIDS, this statistic indicates that these young people were infected as teenagers.¹⁷
- The needs of young women at risk for HIV are currently ignored by most service providers and very few resources are allocated to this population.
- The prevalence of substance abuse is higher for LGBTQ youth than for other youth: 50% higher for alcohol use, three times higher for marijuana use, and eight times higher for cocaine/crack use.¹⁸

Youth Services

Despite a need for services, many youth service providers don't incorporate the needs of LGBTQ youth into their programs and funding resources aren't allocated to support programs for LGBTQ youth.

- Very few youth organizations in San Francisco have programs specifically serving LGBTQ youth.
- Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) serves about 1000 youth annually.¹⁹
- Over 12,000 youth reach out to LYRIC's Talk Line every year.²⁰

¹¹ G. Remafedi, "Male Homosexuality: The Adolescent's Perspective," 79 *Pediatrics* 326-30 (1987).

¹² Phyllis Burke, *Gender Shock: Exploding the Myths of Male and Female*, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York (1996) p. 60-61.

¹³ *Id.* at 92.

¹⁴ E.S. Hetrick, A.D. Martin, "Developmental Issues and Their Resolution for Gay and Lesbian Adolescents," 14(1/2) *Journal of Homosexuality* 25-43 (1987).

¹⁵ San Francisco Department of Public Health AIDS Office, Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control, S.F. City Clinic Special Programs for Youth and S.F. Department of Welfare, *The Young Men's Survey: Principal Findings and Results* (San Francisco, CA, June 1991).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control, 1992.

¹⁸ Telljohann, Price, Pourselami & Easton, *Journal of School Health*, January 1995, Vol. 65, No. 1.

¹⁹ Oren Slozberg, LYRIC Fact Sheet, 1996.

²⁰ *Id.*



Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.
Mayor

Contract Compliance
Dispute Resolution/Fair Housing
Minority/Women/Local Business Enterprise
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & HIV Discrimination

Marivic S. Bamba
Executive Director

Final Agenda for Public Hearing
on
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth

Board of Supervisors' Chambers
401 Van Ness Ave., Room 404, Interim City Hall, San Francisco
September 26, 1996, 4:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Section and Speakers

Time

Introduction and Overview

4:30 - 5:00

Hon. Martha Knutzen, Chair, San Francisco Human Rights Commission
Hon. Jesse Costello-Good, Commissioner, San Francisco Youth Commission
Hon. Kent Khounsombath, Commissioner, San Francisco Youth Commission
Hon. Michael Yaki, Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Hon. Tom Ammiano, Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Hon. Susan Leal, Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Crystal Weston, Legislative Assistant to Supervisor Leslie Katz

Youth Testimony

5:00 - 6:30

Gina De Vries - Schools
Wilson Fang - Health
Chandra Andrews - Family, Housing and Shelter
David Lopez - Youth Services
Adriana San Pedro - Juvenile Justice
Vitaly
Mark Rhoades
Alexander D. Sarmiento
Hillary Brown
Brett Van
Chris Young
Mona Forde
Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán
Yvette Robles
Hakeem Oseni
Joseph Gentry



Gretchen Atwood
Doug Au
Delphine Brody
Jaron Kanegson
Amy Paul
Erick Tyson
Tulani
Kika Solis

Break

6:30 - 6:50

Youth and the Schools

6:50 - 7:40

Hon. Steve Phillips, President, San Francisco Board of Education
Dr. Joyce Fetro, Supervisor of School Health Programs, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)
Larry Alegre, Co-Chair, Gay and Lesbian United Educators
Kevin Gogin, Director of Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth, SFUSD
Tom Henning, Teacher, SFUSD
Meyla Rewin, Health Resource Specialist, SFUSD
Ede Imeri, member, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
Sheila Ortiz, member, PFLAG
Camomile de Quelquechose, Lesbian and Gay Parents Association
Marcus Arana, Speakers Bureau Coordinator, Community United Against Violence

Family, Housing and Shelter

7:40 - 8:15

Thomas Rutherford, Child Welfare Supervisor, S.F. Department of Human Services
Evelyn Poates, Child Welfare Worker, S.F. Department of Human Services
Cheryl Deaner, Director, Alternative Family Project
Diane Manning, Associate Director of Programs, Larkin Street Youth Center
Rev. Jim Mitulski, Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church
Tony Noble, Health and Support Service Coordinator, Hospitality House
Kelly O'Neal, Director of Community Building, Street Survival Project
Angela Osirio, Counselor, Bobbie's Love and Care Rainbow Home

Youth and Health

8:15 - 8:45

Dana van Gorder, Lesbian and Gay Health Services Coordinator, S.F. Department of Public Health
Kiki Whitlock, Transgender Program Coordinator, Asian AIDS Project
Ruth Hughes, Health Program Coordinator, Center for Special Problems
Julie Graham, Therapist
Renee Smith, Adolescent Mental Health Services Coordinator, Walden House
Larry Turner, Member/volunteer, BAY Positives
Henry Ocampo, Prevention Project Leader, Chances for Youth Collaborative
Shivaun Nestor, Health Educator, WEDGE Program

Youth Services

8:45 - 9:25

Winna Davis, Senior Grants Manager, Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families
Mitch Thompson, Assistant Recreation Director, S.F. Department of Recreation and Parks
Meredith Broome, Youth Services Coordinator, Queer Youth Training Collaborative
Ken Bukowski, Executive Director, Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC)
David Weiner, Director, Visitacion Valley Community Beacon
Jade Kwan, Health Educator, Chameleon Program, Asian AIDS Project
Peter Russell, Ph.D., Director, Gay and Lesbian Teen Intervention Project, YMCA
Jose Garcia, Lambda Youth and Family Empowerment (LYFE)

The Juvenile Justice System

9:25 - 9:50

Sgt. Michael Jefferies, Youth Program Services Coordinator, S.F. Police Department
Melinda Mills, Senior Supervising Probation Officer, S.F. Probation Services
Judy Griffin, Director, S.F. Juvenile Hall
Michael Baxter, Assistant Director, Special Programs for Youth
Maria Cora, Health Educator, Special Programs for Youth

Public Comment

9:50-10:00

Tamara Ching
Michael Spencer
Brett Van
Larry Turner

29TH ANNIVERSARY



Invisible youth

Even in San Francisco, coming out for queer youth is a tough, sometimes mortal challenge.

By Leslie A. Lowell

NIKKI WAS 15 YEARS OLD when the Christian high school she attended near Los Angeles forced her to undergo psychiatric evaluation for her problem—being a lesbian.

A teacher had found a note Nikki (not her real name) had written to "Julie," her best friend and lover, and reported them to the principal. Upon enrolling in the school, both girls had been required to sign a contract stating that they would not smoke, experiment with drugs or alcohol, or have sex out of wedlock.

"I've never been so scared in my entire life," Nikki, now 19, recalled of the meetings with school officials and counseling sessions that would determine if she could return to school. "It was hell. What I went through still has an effect on me to this day."

Fortunately for Nikki, the experience eventually caused her parents to rally to support her in the face of her forced "outing." Even though the school approved her return, Nikki eventually transferred to a public school.

"I don't know what I would've done if my parents had totally gone against me," she said in an interview in a San Francisco café. "By dealing with the thought of [not] having those feelings is hard enough."

Unfortunately, young people dealing with the question of their sexuality—especially if it goes against the societal norm of heterosexuality—aren't always so lucky.

As if adolescence weren't difficult enough, queer youth often feel

queer-youth problems statistically: Most agencies dealing with youth problems like substance abuse and suicide don't break them down by sexual identity.

However, according to a recent nationwide study from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the number of gay, lesbian, or bisexual youth between the ages of 10 and 19 who were admitted into psychiatric hospitals rose 43 percent between 1980 and 1987. In 1990 a federal review of some 500 psychiatric cases involving youth discovered that two-thirds of the hospitalizations were unnecessary.

San Francisco isn't by any means exempt from the problems. "Homophobia is still very prevalent in the [San Francisco] school system because people have stigmas of what it means to be gay or lesbian," Oren Stouber, after-school program coordinator at LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center), the city's first and only queer-youth community center, told the Bay Guardian. "Most gay batters against other teens are teenagers in high school," he said.

Fear and ignorance are still the two leading factors in homophobia, even in San Francisco. A 1984 study produced by the National Gay Task Force in New York found that 45 percent of gay males and 20 percent of lesbians polled said they had experienced verbal and physical assaults in secondary school.

Supervisor Tom Amiano, a former teacher and school board

member, said that while queer youth are finally getting the attention they deserve from the school system, "it's very slow moving."

"The day when a [queer] student can walk down the hallway in school and not be threatened by another kid is the day when we know we're moving in the right direction," Amiano told the Bay Guardian.

Finding community

Enrique (not his real name) is 18 years old. Half Mexican and half Filipino, he grew up in San Francisco's Mission District but now lives in a South San Francisco public-housing project. He comes from a broken home with a family history of drug abuse. Enrique comes into the city often to visit his maternal grandmother, who essentially raised him, and to seek refuge at LYRIC.

"I can remember saying to myself, 'If only he was a girl it would work out,'" Enrique said of his first crush on another boy, back in the third grade. He felt he finally realized that he was gay in the sixth grade but never talked about it to anyone. "I felt awkward, different completely. I never dealt with it within myself."

While attending middle school, Enrique says that he "put on the straight act." Enrique came out to a handful of friends his sophomore year in high school. "I felt scared," he said. "I felt relieved. I felt it was going to be a chain reaction and people were going to find out, and I would be miserable ... that I lived up to having to [leave] my school ... but I didn't."

Groups like LYRIC are trying to create supportive communities to help queer youth develop positive identities. Founded in 1983 by Beth Kivel, Donna Oza, and a group of youth, LYRIC provides leadership development, recreation opportunities, and counseling and referrals for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth under age 22.

Each year, the group serves about 11,000 people, including the 10,000 or so phone calls that LYRIC's hot line receives (the number is 415-863-3036). LYRIC has inspired queer youth across the nation to form their own community centers. The organization has received inquiries from groups in Missouri, Alaska, and as far away as Venezuela.

Many queer youth I spoke with said they had been drawn more closely to people of their own sex, especially in early childhood. The attractions were both physical and emotional, sometimes to a best friend, or even to a teacher or mentor. Some realized at an early age that the feelings were more than just infatuations—they were part of their sexual identities. Others

took years.

The emotional roller coaster that follows this realization can run for years. Kids endure feelings of loneliness and guilt, fears of abandonment by peers and family, until reaching the inevitable: coming out.

Speaking from personal experience, I can say that discovering that you are gay, lesbian, or bisexual is not so much a choice as a feeling. And when those feelings come from society's norm, the passage into adulthood becomes even more difficult, affecting every aspect of your life.

Enrique has still not come out to his family. "I think they know, but they expect me to be straight.... They like it that way, and they're not going to talk about [me] being gay at all."

Some youth run away from home rather than risk coming out to their families; others are kicked out. According to Diane Manning, associate director of program services at San Francisco's Larkin Street Youth Center, 25 percent of the homeless youth that Larkin Street served from 1993-94 were lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

San Francisco's Huckleberry House provides drop-in shelter for homeless youth aged 12-18. Last year, the nonprofit had 771 youth clients and found that 102 of them had suffered from physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse. They estimate that about 10 percent of Huckleberry's clients were gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Founded in 1967, Huckleberry House functions mainly to offer families and medical professionals housing placement. The average age of their clients is 14 and a half. With a 24-hour hot line but only six beds, Huckleberry is a short-term crisis center where youth can stay only two or three nights.

"There are social and economic problems and family problems that youth just can't deal with," Michelle Migos, Huckleberry's house deputy executive director, told the Bay Guardian.

"It's getting worse.... We need to learn as a society that we need to have help [for young people] early on."

Risky business

Self-education through substance abuse and risky behavior is also more prevalent among queer youth whose lack of self-esteem and self-worth comes from feeling that their lives are somehow worse than those of heterosexuals.

A recent study conducted by the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at UC San Francisco found that out of 1,000 new HIV infections expected in the city this year, 650 will be in gay or bisexual men, half of them under the age of 24. The same study



ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK GONZALEZ

San Francisco Bay Guardian, October 4, 1995 27

Queer Youth in San Francisco

By Tim Kingston

Photos by Phil Migliarese, Jr.

the best resource in being able to tell us what is going on, [that includes] the zine or other networks, internet or anything. You are able to connect in ways and progress in ways that some of us have not had the benefit of and perhaps that is just the nature of evolution in general."

Voices of Authority

The queer youth and advocates present shared very specific and concrete concerns, primarily invisibility, safety and—to use a clichéd phrase—empowerment. Nadya Rosen, LYRIC administrative coordinator: "For me as a queer youth, the most pressing



On July 30, *San Francisco Frontiers* convened a panel of 16 queer youth service providers and youths to discuss the current state of affairs for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth in the Bay Area.

Queer youth in San Francisco are better served now than ever before, but there is still a long way to go. There are several agencies directly serving queer youth such as Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC), Health Initiatives for Youth (HIFY), Drama Divas and Bay Positives. There is a slew of other organizations offering programs and services to queer youth: the Larkin Street Youth Center (LSYC), the Brothers Network and the Living Well Project. That is not to forget all the youth AIDS prevention efforts funded by the SF AIDS Foundation, the Stop AIDS Project and virtually every other AIDS prevention agency.

For the first time, queer youth and queer youth issues are on the radar screen of City government with the appointment of youth activist Jesse Costello-Good to the Youth Commission. There is much talk





Left to right, Brian Chau of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, Oren Slobzberg, Ken Bukowski and Oga Texidor of LYRIC.

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For the first time, queer youth and queer youth issues are on the radar screen of City government with the appointment of youth activist Jesse Costello to the Youth Commission. There is much talk of how queer youth issues will be incorporated into the upcoming Youth Summit, scheduled to take place shortly after the Sept. 26 San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) public hearing on queer youth. There is even a 119-page resource guide put out by LYRIC and the HRC for Bay Area lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth with information on the queer community, talk lines, agencies, support groups, health issues and basic survival issues.

That is all a far cry from five or so years ago when LYRIC was the only game in town. "We missed a beat for a long time," says Supervisor Tom Ammiaro, a long time advocate for queer youth issues on both the School Board and Board of Supervisors. "For a long time, many years, gay youth fell between the cracks." Things have changed, says Ammiaro. "Now young people are saying 'you were the generation before us, now we need services and recognition.' We have taken baby steps. We have a long ways to go. Now it is time to put meat on the bone."

Still, the situation is far from perfect. Many youth service organizations fail to serve queer youth. Many that do implicitly serve queer youth who are not out or deny they exist. Efforts have even been made to roll back recognition of queer youth issues that has been made. Recognizing that there have been both tremendous advances made by, and obstacles facing, queer youth and their advocates *San Francisco Fron-*

tiers convened a round table discussion involving some of the players involved.

On Tuesday, July 30, 16 individuals sat down and started talking. Bay Positives, HIFY, LYRIC, LSYC, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center, the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families (MOCYF), the Q-Action group of Stop AIDS Project, the San Francisco HRC, San Francisco School District and San Francisco's City College were all there. This is a record of some of their thoughts.

Perhaps the overall flavor of the day was best put by Andrea Shorter, a new trustee to the board of City College and head of the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice's detention diversion advocacy project. She says, "There is an old civil rights saying: 'We are not where we should be, but at least we ain't where we were before.'"

She added, "As far as adults are concerned, don't be afraid to listen to young people ... The youth are

issue is invisibility of queer youth ... I used to be on the talk line at LYRIC ... I was amazed by the number of calls we got. And there is this part of me that [says] I can't believe that I was amazed. Of course there are tons of queer youth out there. I would sit at the phones for three hours a week ... and get all these calls. One of the first things that people would say is 'Are you gay? Are you gay? Are you young? How old are you? Are you gay? How long have you been gay? Do your parents know?'

"And this was the most amazing thing. This was the first time they had talked to someone who was their peer, who was also queer and could maybe have a life, and talk about what it meant to be queer and young and do other things, like play sports, and go to school and live at home or not ... We need to create more forums where we can actually see each other. Not on the internet. Not on the phone, but where we can physically say 'I am queer, I am a young person,

isco: Critical Mass Achieved?



Left to right, Ramon Martinez of Bay Positives, Nadya Rosen of LYRIC, Yesenia Aguirre and Tony Hall of Health Initiatives for Youth.

and I am here standing right in front of your face."

Despite all the changes, the invisibility factor for youth has stayed consistent, says Kevin Gogin, lesbian/gay youth program director for San Francisco Unified School District. "It is no different in America to be queer today than what it was to be queer 10 years ago or 20 years ago or 40 years. There is still this invisibility that you are the only one and that has not changed. And our systems are not allowing it to be changed." He adds, "We use the term youth. I am

especially young from hurting ourselves—Everyone knows about the high suicide rate, the high rate of alcoholism, drug addiction, and slipping into unsafe sex, not knowing about unsafe sex or not knowing about safer sex a lot of times. Safety, the broader issue, is the most important issue."

For several of the queer youth in the room, the issue was not just about services that are needed, but taking the power to take care of themselves. "A service provider is not just that person that has a Ph.D or BA or MSG, if you know what I mean," quipped Yesenia Aguirre of Health Initiatives for Youth, who is both a service provider and client at Health Initiatives for Youth.

"I am a youth, I am 21 years old and have been doing peer education for seven years. As a young Latina lesbian, HIFY has provided for me an enormous amount of room to grow and to empower myself," says Aguirre. "HIFY is a very unique agency in that most of the youth services teams out of HIFY are young people. These are young people designing and coordinating programs that are very cutting edge ... Letting youth do things for themselves, that is right on, because that is what worked for me."





Left to right, Ramon Martinez of Bay Positives, Nadya Rosen of LYRIC, Yesenia Aguirre and Tony Hall of Health Initiatives for Youth.

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Safety was a primary issue, among many panelists, and for LYRIC's Olga Textidor. "If I were to try to pick one [issue], it would definitely be that there is not enough support or safety for queer youth. There is not enough safety in the Castro. There is no safety in the schools, most of the time there is no safety at home ... I was a queer youth five, six years ago. It was not until I came to LYRIC that I felt safe ... People who come to LYRIC are getting beat up all the time at school. We have one person coming to LYRIC who used to get beat up everyday at school, and is now no longer in the school system."

"In terms of safety, there is like, no safety. A lot of queer youth who come to LYRIC, if they are not already homeless, they are possibly going to be homeless if they come out to their parents ... These queer youth don't have homes and if they do have homes, they have to totally switch their identities; so they would rather not go home. They end up hanging out. There is no place for them to hang out and they



Left to right, Eric Chissulo, Mike Glatze, Jeff Mori and Ramon Martinez.

start getting into things that are not safe for them to be doing."

Broader definitions of safety were also invoked by Mayoral liaison to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered community Dean Goodwin. "Not just physical safety and safety in coming out, but safety of protecting us as queer people young and otherwise, but

Perhaps that is the strongest thing that San Francisco can offer queer youth—models where queer youth are in charge, instead of being the targets for services. In San Francisco, youth are creating programs, running budgets and offering services that usher more youth into the fold. They, in turn, learn to become activists as is the case with Q-Action's

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Queer Youth in San Francisco

SQUIRM, a co-gender activist group designed to make the Republican's miserable in San Diego. For Mike Glatz, activism is the route to empowerment—not support groups. "When I see the word support, all I think about is somebody who needs help," grumbled Glatz. "When I think of somebody who needs help, I think of somebody who is not normal. For me, that just reinforces the notion of queer not being normal."

That mixture of youth services, activism and empowerment is something endemic among queer youth service agencies in San Francisco, but it is something that is almost unheard of elsewhere. "Everybody is focusing on peer facilitation, peer health educators, youth speakers bureaus," declared Oren Stolzberg, program director at LYRIC. "That is not common among standard straight, or should I say non-queer services providers. That is because the queer community has recognized that the real power is within the people that need the services ... If we don't do it for ourselves, nobody is going to do it. That philosophy has kind of trickled down to the fact that when you are working with queer youth, they can really have their own voice, can say what they want and can define what they want."

I Left My Heart...

While San Francisco has a world-wide reputation as a gay Mecca, for many youth it is far from that. And that is not just talking about the runaways on Polk Street. Jesse Costello-Good, one of the youngest members of the San Francisco Youth Commission, asked "Why would kids be interested? Why would they come. Now we are left with the Castro or the Polk, or the bars. And we all know what the Polk offers. The Castro is designed for older affluent white gay men."

For Diane Manning, of Larkin Street Youth Center, the myth of San Francisco is what draws many



Left to right, Jaime Silva of the Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center of Los Angeles, Mayoral liaison to the LGBT Community Dean Goodwin and San Francisco Youth Commissioner Jesse Costello-Good.

too ... What we have not done is challenge organizations to become more queer sensitive. We are at a time to make that challenge." ▢

For further information on the groups that participated in San Francisco Frontiers panel discussion on Queer Youth, contact the following:

• **Bay Positives**, 518 Waller St., San Francisco, CA 94117. Telephone 415/487-1616, fax 415/487-1617, e-mail: BAYPOZ@aol.com.

• **Health Initiatives for Youth (HIYF)**, 1242 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94102, telephone 415/487-5777, fax 415/487-5771.

tion offered by Jeff Mori, director of the Mayor's Office of Youth, Children and their Family's (MOYCF), Kevin Gogin and Andrea Shorter tends to be anyone under 18. As Shorter put it "at age 18 you are on your own." But when it came to service provision, there was more flexibility. Bay Positives draws the line at 26. HIYF says the range is 14 to 24, and Mori says when he worked in a youth-oriented non profit, the cut-off was 25.

The importance of the definition became clear when Mori was challenged about the levels of funding provided to queer youth under the Children's Fund. After being handed the tape recorder by another participant, just to make clear he was on the record, Mori replied: "Looking at the percent of [Children's Fund money] ... you are probably right. It is a very low level of funding." But Mori pointed out part of the prob-

philosophy has kind of trickled down to the fact that when you are working with queer youth, they can really have their own voice, can say what they want and can define what they want."

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For Diane Manning, of Larkin Street Youth Center, the myth of San Francisco is what draws many of the gay youth she sees, who comprise up to 30 percent of that agency's client base. "They are drawn here for mythical reasons... [Like to Los Angeles or New York] Cities where there is an illusion, and to some extent a greater reality than other parts of the country, where as a young person or older person you can't out. Most of the kids that I see have left home [for reasons] related to [the fact that] they can't be in their communities or they can't be in their homes."

Manning added, "[For] the kids that I see, there is not necessarily a lot of difference between the Castro and the Polk. They can get what they need in either place; one is just a little bit more sophisticated and smooth about it."

But there is more to San Francisco queer youth than runaways. The problem is figuring out who and what that is. At the very beginning of the discussion, a great deal of time was spent by all the participants trying to define exactly what queer youth is, to the exasperation of some of the queer youth present, who wanted to get onto more pressing and—for them—urgent questions.

According to those present, how queer youth is defined tends to be intimately linked with it is services, or funding bases, that are being talked about. When it comes to funding and resources, the defini-

tion offered by Jeff Mori, director of the Mayor's Office of Youth, Children and their Family's (MOYCF), Kevin Goggin and Andrea Shorter tends to be anyone under 18. As Shorter put it "at age 18 you are on your own." But when it came to service provision, there was more flexibility. Bay Positives draws the line at 26, HIPPY says the range is 14 to 24, and Mori says when he worked in a youth-oriented non profit, the cut-off was 25.

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But Hector Carrillo of Q-Action warned, "It is important for all of us to keep an eye on the world we create as service providers versus the world outside and the way that people relate to each other... So in terms of targeting and defining who the target population is, we have to be very careful at keeping an eye on reality and not getting caught up in our artificial social service world." He also points out that the term *gay youth* covers a multitude of sins, beyond the tendency of service providers' inability to see past their own definitions.

Still, the very fact there are enough queer services providers around to debate the definition is a step forward from years past. "What is truly remarkable is we have developed a critical mass of services, often by young queers," said veteran queer youth advocate Eric Chissulo. "This gives us an incredible opportunity to define culturally appropriate services for queer youth. This gives us an opportunity to turn outward and demand a higher level of inclusion of queer services for queer youth in non-queer agencies. Not only do we want our own services, we want integration

too... What we have not done is challenge organizations to become more queer sensitive. We are at a time to make that challenge."

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- **Larkin Street Youth Center (LSYC)**, 1044 Larkin St., San Francisco, CA 94109, telephone 415/673-0911, fax 415/923-1378
- **Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC)**, 123 Collingwood, San Francisco, CA 94114, telephone 415/703-6150, youth talk line 415/683-3835, in SF outside S.F.I.-800-246-PRIDE, fax 415/703-6153, e-mail: lyric@hectic.sfsu.edu
- **Stop AIDS Project, Q-Action**, 201 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114, telephone 415/627-7177, fax 415/252-5352
- **San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC)**, c/o Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102, telephone 415/257-2540, fax 431-5764, e-mail: shrc@ix.netcom.com
- **San Francisco Youth Commission**, c/o San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 401 Van Ness Ave., Rm. #302, San Francisco, CA 94102, Attn: Clerk of the Board, 415/651-5163
- For a copy of "OUT in the City, The Resource Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth in the Bay Area," call the San Francisco Human Rights Commission at 415/252-2500

HRC to release queer youth findings tonight

by Jesse Costello-Good

After more than a year of research, public meetings, and hearings, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission is expected to approve a final draft of its Findings and Recommendations on LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning] Youth at its meeting tonight (Thursday, December 12). Community members expect the document to become a citywide blueprint for creating the services to meet the needs of queer youth.

The 27-page document, which in its most recent draft includes

96 findings and 116 recommendations, was produced after the Human Rights and Youth Commissions' landmark hearing on LGBTQ youth in September. That hearing included testimony from over 30 youth, as well as representatives from most agencies and organizations in the city that serve queer youth.

Recommendations expected to be approved tonight include mandating the Department of Human Services to ensure that group homes are sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ youth; reinforcing that a teacher's obligation to teach students includes the responsibility to make classrooms and schools a safe place for all students, including LGBTQ students; and ensuring no city funds are spent on treatments or programs using Gender Identity Disorder to "treat" actual or perceived homosexuality or transgenderism.

The hearing and preliminary recommendations have already spawned a sweeping San Francisco School Board resolution introduced by Commissioner Angie Fa in October. That resolution, which, among other things, mandated enforcement of the SFUSD anti-slur policy and sensitivity trainings for teachers, passed

unanimously.

Brian Cheu, staff of the Human Rights Commission, told the *Bay Area Reporter*, "It is really exciting that these findings and recommendations have acted as a catalyst for a similar resolution by the school board, and also an upcoming resolution by the Board of Supervisors."

Supervisors Tom Ammiano and Leslie Katz plan a follow-up hearing for service providers, with the goal of securing more funding for LGBTQ youth services.

A comprehensive document that includes summaries of the testimony is expected to be printed by February 1997 and will be distributed to city agencies, schools, and service providers as a queer youth reference. The Human Rights Commission hopes to distribute the document to the LIFE Lobby, the queer lobbying group in Sacramento, in order to develop a statewide youth agenda.

In addition, Cheu said, "The HRC plans to present this document during the public hearing on the annual Children Services Plan to make sure that the plan properly includes the needs of queer youth in its funding priorities." ▼

MILES BAINBRIDGE

Miles Bainbridge is 14, and would be entering ninth grade in the fall — if he were still in school. Now he's studying at home.

Marina Middle School is really going to miss me. I was the guy who worked in the office, kept the copiers and computers running. I fixed the instruments for the band, and worked lights and curtains in the auditorium.

I was like 10 janitors.

But I had to leave school during the middle of eighth grade.

People have always assumed I was gay, although I deny it. I went to elementary school in the Sebastopol area, and it was terrible. They started calling me names in kindergarten, and beating me up in first grade.

Boys and girls would just come up to me and do anything — ruin my property, spread glue all over a nice shirt. That was one of the kindest things they did.

One time in an after-school program, I was just sitting alone in a tree and a group of 12 kids came up and threw a huge tree limb at my head. I was knocked out of the tree and down the hill, and I still have a lump on my head. Nothing was ever done about that.

It's pretty much a social condition — people are taught to be afraid of gays and lesbians. Up there, it's really hick territory. They don't know better. Down here, I think people know they could do better.

James Lick Middle School was really terrible. Kids started beating me up the second day of seventh grade.

It got so bad that

my mom went on a field trip once, and they were threatening her and making homophobic remarks. The teachers tried, but they just had no control over the students.

I transferred to Marina in the fall of '94. After about three months I started getting homophobic remarks. One day, people cornered me in a classroom and conducted some sort of inquisition. My grades fell so much.

It was never safe enough to come out there, but for some people the closet just isn't big enough.

I left after I started telling my mom about the harassment. She started trying to get me into home schooling. We went through every office in the school district, and the only people who felt sympathetic and empathetic for my situation and willing to take action were in dropout prevention.

Life is much better now. I have a job at Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, the gay youth group, and have made all sorts of friends there.

I have a brand new Powerbook that I love to go on the Internet with. I play about 25 different instruments, and I recently got a mixer, and I've been mixing prerecorded music. I just love the New Main Library.

I don't miss anything about school.



FIRST PERSON

GLENN WORDEN

Glenn Worden, 17, graduated from Skyline High School in Oakland on June 13 and hopes life will be easier at Cal State Hayward, where he'll start on a scholarship in the fall.



I started by wearing a tiny rainbow triangle on the collar of my shirt. I think within my first three weeks at school, everyone knew — and the trouble started.

At my school, if you're a white kid that's different, they just assume you're gay. Anyone who's different is picked on. Anything that's weird or out of the norm, they say, "Oh, that's so gay."

Earlier this year a student called me "fag" in class. I asked her to please not use that word around me. But the teacher said it was a "perfectly fine word in our culture" and had

meant positive things, like cigarette.

I talked to the administrator, and he said, "What can I do, Glenn? You're a minority, and you have to get used to this."

One time, a sophomore followed me around with pictures of naked women, saying, "Here, look at this, maybe you'll change." He also threatened to tell a gang member I had a crush on him. I reported him, and they warned him he'd be expelled if he did it again. His defense was that I'd harassed him — by talking about cute boys within his hearing.

A lot of the black students really do come down hard. I get called "faggot" in the hall three or four times a week, or "f—— Jew," "whitey," "fag boy." I've gotten to the point where I can laugh it off, tell myself these people are being really ignorant, and there's nothing I can do to change their minds.

I'm in the Performing Arts Academy program, and that was my shell last year.

It's affected my work. When I first got to Skyline, I was enthused and did all my work. Last semester, I did maybe 10 percent of my homework and my average dropped to a 3.5. In 10th grade, when I was doing home schooling, my lowest grade was an A minus.

I hate it, I despise it with every ounce of my being. And even so, I think Skyline is one of the safest schools in Oakland to be out.

S.F. Examiner, 6/30/90

JESSE COSTELLO- GOOD

Jesse Costello-Good, 16, will be a senior at University High, a private school in San Francisco. He heads The City's Youth Commission and likes to kayak.



EXAMINER/CRISTINA KOCI HERNANDEZ

I'm just coming out — and I'm the only person in my school who's out. It's not easy.

I'm starting a discussion group at school for gay and lesbian issues, and I had to get up in front of the whole school and announce our meetings. I said, "Yes, we're going to talk about homophobia in our school." I'd never been so out.

A lot of people came up afterward and said, "That was a good announcement, you looked calm even though you must have been scared to death." No one said anything to me about my being gay. I expect other students to come out to me.

Coming out at school has been gradual. My parents confronted me at the end of my sophomore year.

We had gay friends. My mom lived in the Castro during my middle school years, and some of my closest adult friends growing up were lesbians. They were really motherly.

Still, when I first realized I was gay, I thought I didn't want to lead the lifestyle, as I perceived it to be. I didn't want to be an old man who lived alone in the Castro. It seemed dirty and nasty and very open.

Now, I like it. I know other gay kids my age, and it doesn't seem weird. It was my own homophobia, and I got over it because I had to.

My sophomore year, I told one girl at school. I was just bored with everyone talking about who was attractive. The girls got to. I thought, "Why can't I?" She was cool, and we're still close.

This year, I came out to another girl, and we got pretty close. Then, I told an English teacher — she's a lesbian, and she's giggly and nice and accessible.

I felt like action had to be taken after someone wrote anonymously to the school newsletter, saying, "Someone come out, because I feel very lonely." I wrote back, anonymously, that there are other people, and let's both tell the teacher. So we did.

I know two other gay guys at school, but they aren't out. They're afraid to tell their parents.

I don't get hassled at school — it's a polite school. You would never get anything in your face. One person who heard the word "fag" flung across the courtyard wrote an article saying you shouldn't do that.

Since I came out, I volunteered for Roberta Achtenberg's campaign and then for Supervisor Tim Ammann. Now, I'm one of two queer youths on The City's Youth Commission. The thing about San Francisco is that even though it's special, it's not incredibly wonderful for gay youth.

BAY AREA

gional Shoreline on Doolittle Drive.

Reynolds of the Chabot Creek Valley.

S.F. Holds Its 1st Hearing For Gay Youths Today

By David Tutter
Chronicle Staff Writer

More than two dozen young people will tell their stories today in San Francisco's first-ever hearing on the needs and issues confronting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youths.

The hearing, jointly sponsored by the city's Human Rights and Youth commissions, will focus on a number of key issues: harassment in the schools; health concerns, including high levels of unsafe sex and a disproportionate rate of suicide and suicide attempts among non-heterosexual teenagers; the need for service providers and organizations to reach out to gay youths; and discrimination in areas such as housing and the juvenile justice system.

"Young queer people often do not have an opportunity to voice their needs and are left out of services," said Kent Khounsombath, 20, a member of the Youth Commission who will co-chair the hearing.

"I didn't get the chance to come out in high school because the school was incredibly homophobic," added Khounsombath. "People were teased and shunned; they had lies and gossip spread about them, and they'd often get jumped if other people thought they were gay. It would have been great just to have a gay club, where you could go to meet others and be yourself in a safe environment."

Brian Cheu, who handles anti-

gay discrimination complaints at the Human Rights Commission, said that the agency's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Committee decided last year to make youth concerns a top priority.

Later this fall, he said, the agency plans to issue recommendations on how the city and non-profit agencies can better serve gay youths.

According to a fact sheet issued by the Human Rights Commission:

■ In a study of 137 gay and bisexual young men, 29 percent had attempted suicide. Other studies have shown that almost a third of youth suicides are committed by those with a nontraditional sexual orientation or gender identity.

■ More than a quarter of non-heterosexual youths are forced to leave home because of conflicts with their families about their sexual orientation.

■ The peer counseling telephone line sponsored by Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, one of the few agencies to serve gay youths, receives more than 12,000 calls a year.

■ Gay youths in the juvenile justice system are often punished for their sexual or gender identity rather than the crime for which they were sentenced.

The hearing will be held at 4:30 p.m. today at 401 Van Ness Ave. Room 404, San Francisco. For more information, call (415) 252-2550.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Subject: Resolution No. 610-8A6

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS**
- Commissioner Angie Fa

WHEREAS: The San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the San Francisco Youth Commission held a public hearing on September 26, 1996 regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning ("LGBT") youth in the San Francisco schools and heard testimony which included that: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth often face severe isolation and fear regarding coming out; and nationally 45% of gay males and 20% of lesbians experience verbal or physical assault in high school; and nationally 28% of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth who experience verbal or physical assault based on their sexual orientation are forced to drop out of high school because of the harassment they experience; and lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth because of societal oppression and discrimination; and

WHEREAS: In 1990 the SFUSD created the Office of Support Services for Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Youth within the School Health Programs Department, a unique program to better serve the pressing needs of LGBTQ youth in the high schools; and

WHEREAS: The Office of Support Services has created a groundbreaking curriculum to encompass education issues, counseling concerns, healthy sexuality development, substance abuse prevention, violence reduction, personal and social skills development, and HIV education, and has implemented curriculum training, sensitivity workshops, and Gay/Lesbian Sensitive Adults in every high school and middle school; and

WHEREAS: A crisis still exists in San Francisco and in every city where society continues to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of all ages, and homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia is rampant and can affect any and every student regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

WHEREAS: Violence is a pervasive problem in the schools for all students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students continue to feel unsafe at school, as do children of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, and these students are often afraid to even check books that deal with LGBT issues out of the school library; and

WHEREAS: Community speakers reported that there have been suicide attempts by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning San Francisco public school students, including a couple of attempts so far this year; and

WHEREAS: Parents in non-traditional families reported that their children continue to face harassment in the schools; and

WHEREAS: The demand for support services for LGBTQ youth has increased as the program has done more outreach, including demands for more basic educational materials and staff; and

MEETING THE NEEDS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

- Commissioner Angie Fa

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WHEREAS: There remains inadequate enforcement of the anti-slur policy and a perceived general lack of sensitivity and knowledge on the part of administrators, faculty, staff, and students regarding LGBTQ youth issues; and

WHEREAS: There continues to be pressure from homophobic members of the community opposing valuable efforts to educate about LGBTQ issues, resulting in the dramatic reduction of requests for presentations by groups such as Community United Against Violence, a community-based agency which provides a valued service by providing school-approved classroom presentation and speakers on lesbian and gay issues in the schools; and

WHEREAS: Some administrators discourage the presentation of approved displays regarding LGBTQ youth and their issues; and

WHEREAS: Many LGBT faculty/staff/administrators are afraid to come out and be supportive of LGBTQ youth; and

WHEREAS: The SFUSD wishes to reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to LGBTQ students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education shall adopt the following to insure that schools are a safe place for LGBTQ youth: increase accountability/responsibility of each school to insure that LGBTQ youth, staff, teachers, and administrators will be safe in that school by including their concerns into every Safe School plan, and provide a safe environment so that LGBT faculty, staff and administrators can come out without fear of reprisal or harassment; to insure total enforcement of the SFUSD anti-slur policy, including the addition of gender identity into the anti-slur policy, and including the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity as a category on incident report forms; to insure that gender identity be included as a protected category in all non-discrimination policies and procedures applying to all SFUSD students, teachers, staff, administrators, and other employees; to insure that sexual orientation and gender identity slurs are to be included as incidents of sexual harassment, and to clarify procedures for handling sexual harassment grievances by students; implement a system for tracking hate-related verbal and physical violence against LGBTQ youths in the schools, (e.g. an annual summary of incidents of slurs made upon the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity); distribute information to students and teachers that makes clear the consequences of hate-related verbal and physical violence against LGBTQ youth, continue efforts to educate and counsel perpetrators, including greater outreach by on-site teachers and administrators, and usage of materials combating homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in all of its manifestations in the schools; strengthen and improve information regarding the school grievance procedures for LGBTQ students who have suffered harassment, discrimination, and/or slurs based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That there should be additional funding to address LGBTQ youth needs: that the SFUSD establish a minimum level of staffing for permanent and ongoing support services for sexual minority youth, regardless of grant funding; funding for books, posters, and visuals for LGBTQ youth, including LGBTQ youth of color, and including funding for books in different languages which address LGBTQ issues; increased funding for the Office of Support Services for Sexual Minority Youth so that the office can expand its services, including added emphasis on elementary schools; funding for Peer Counselors reflecting diversity, insuring bisexual/transgender representation; funding for translation services for support services materials for LGBTQ youth; and

**MEETING THE NEEDS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS**

- Commissioner Angie Fa

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education should continue to provide support for students who have come out or are trying to come out: continue to support LGBTQ student groups and/or LGBT/Heterosexual alliance on each campus; continue to develop ways for LGBTQ youth to meet other LGBTQ youth in a safe, affirming environment; continue to develop effective methods for students, parents, counselors, teachers and administrators to address LGBTQ youth issues and concerns, both informally and through the school administration; continue to expand outreach to the parent community, including parents of LGBTQ students, LGBT parents of students, and other parents; continue to make materials available to parents to answer questions and discuss concerns regarding LGBTQ students; providing increased resources for the elementary school system, including LGBT sensitivity; continue to distribute and post information for students in a safe way regarding access to the designated lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender sensitive teacher so that students can receive information without fear of harassment; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education will continue to provide training and support for faculty, staff, and administrators: mandate that a plan be constructed to provide sensitivity training for all elementary, middle, and high school faculty, staff, and administrators; continue to conduct on-going on-site training of administrators and faculty, especially lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender-sensitive designated adults, on the sensitive management of LGBTQ issues, free of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia; ensure that administrator and faculty annual performance reviews include, as applicable, evaluating effective implementation of LGBT-inclusive curriculum, appropriate enforcement of the District's anti-slur policy, and implementation of all District policies that protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity for students, faculty, staff and administrators; continue to offer training programs currently existing for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender adults and continue to offer training and support to LGBT teachers who want to be additional resources to LGBTQ students; mandate that District-approved LGBT-positive information be displayed at every campus (e.g. the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center's Youth Talkline telephone number); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That curriculum be expanded and improved to address the experience of LGBTQ youth: review all existing curriculum to ensure that it is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and free of heterosexist bias, e.g. teachers should present positive image of LGBT people in the classroom and discuss alternative family configurations; infuse LGBT issues across disciplines, specifically social studies, language arts, and science; ensure that at least one faculty meeting per year include LGBT curriculum training; ensure that the annual administrator training include a section on LGBT issues; continue to provide academic, vocational and counseling assistance to at-risk LGBTQ youth; continue to promote student health by addressing suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, and safer sex education; and continue to actively support a program that provides LGBT speakers to present programs regarding LGBT issues at all middle and high schools (e.g., Community United Against Violence Speakers Bureau).

Subject: Resolution No. 610-8A6
MEETING THE NEEDS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS
- Commissioner Angie Fa

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FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education promotes inclusion of LGBTQ youth as an integral part of the larger student population ensuring that each existing District program is examined and enhanced to address the unique needs of LGBTQ youth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop a comprehensive plan that will build capacity of all District staff to implement programs that will meet the unique needs of LGBTQ youth in a sensitive manner.

NEW LANGUAGE IN ITALICS

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